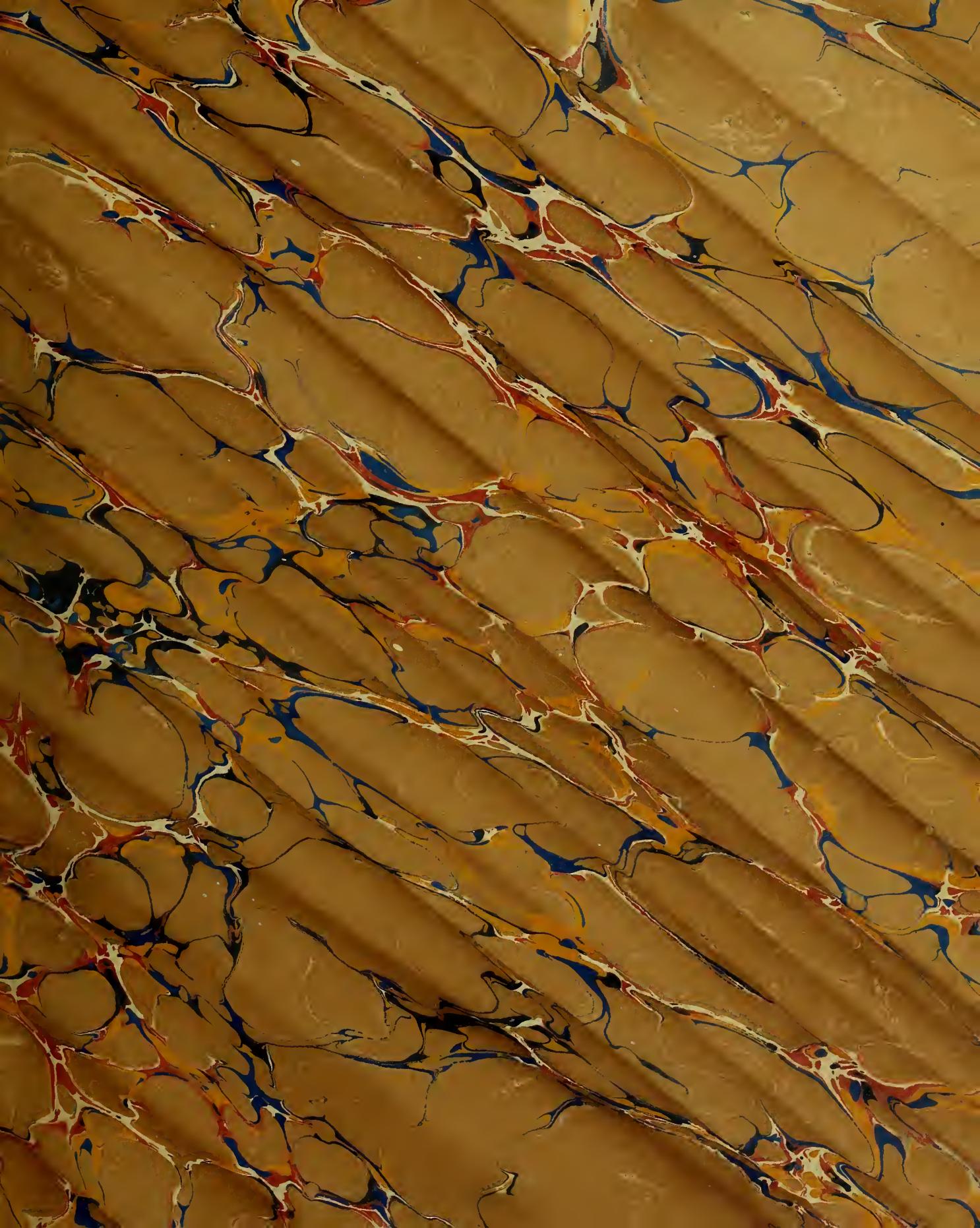




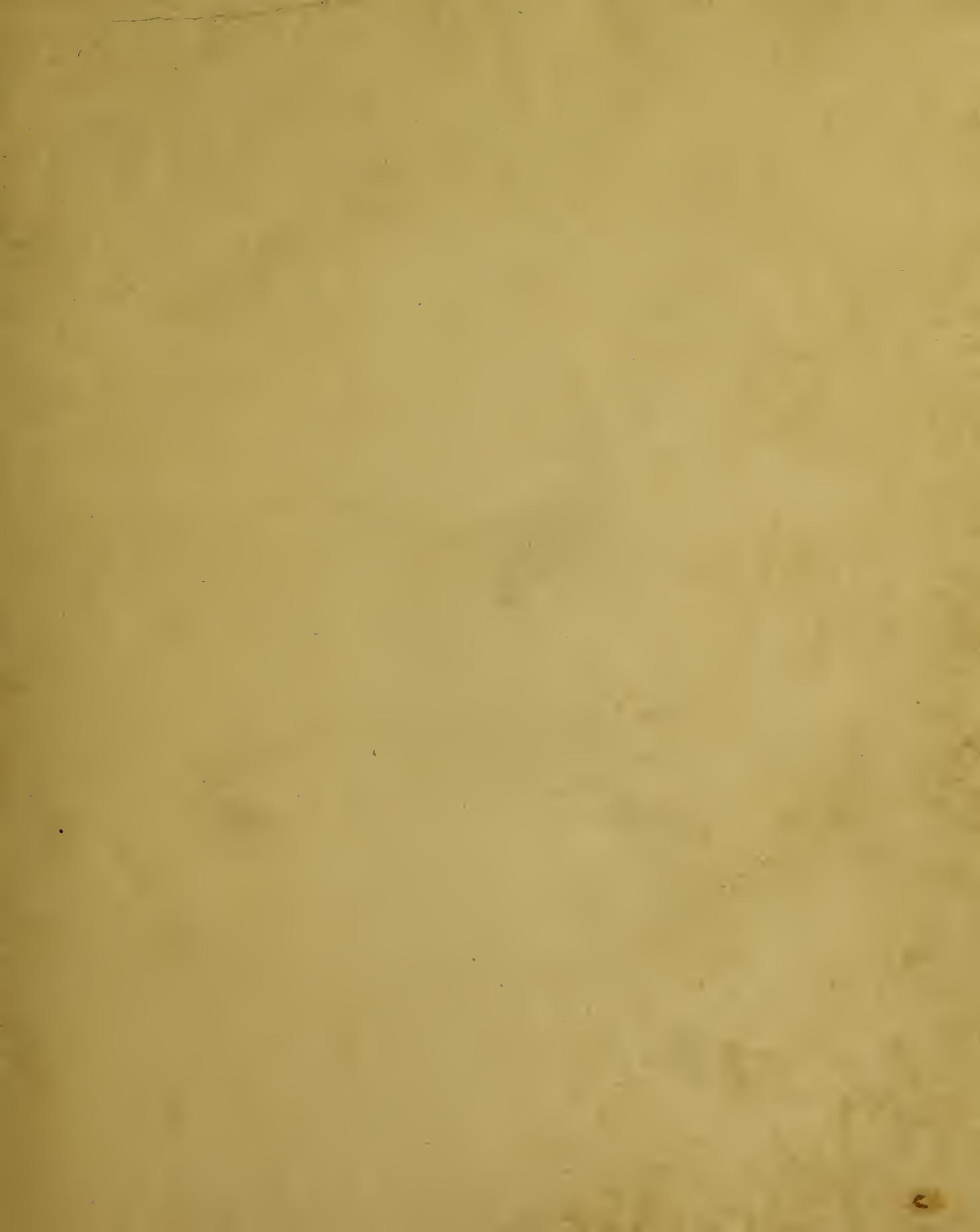
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Striking resemblance between the symbolic deities of

E G Y P T & I N D I A.



Barlow sculp.

I . V A R A A V A T A R

of INDIA .

2 . H E R M E S A N U B I S

of EGYPT .

**OBSERVATIONS
ON THE
REMAINS
OF
ANCIENT EGYPTIAN GRANDEUR
And Superstition,
AS CONNECTED WITH THOSE OF ASSYRIA :**

**FORMING THE
APPENDIX**

TO

OBSERVATIONS ON THE RUINS OF BABYLON.

WITH ILLUSTRATIVE ENGRAVINGS.

BY
THE REV. THOMAS MAURICE, A.M.

Author of Indian Antiquities,
AND ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

IT is with the deepest regret the author informs his Subscribers, that in consequence of the magnitude to which this APPENDIX has unexpectedly swelled, exceeding by nearly a third part the former portion of the work, it is found impossible to deliver it to them under the same price as was charged for the preceding portion, A GUINEA. It is hoped that an adequate apology for this advance will be found in the importance, the variety, and abstruseness, of the subjects discussed in it. In books of deep mythological research, especially *where engravings are necessary*, it is impossible to fix the exact magnitude, or price, of the volume.

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Contents of the Appendix.

1. ON THE OBELISK SAID BY DIODORUS TO HAVE BEEN
ERECTED IN BABYLON BY SEMIRAMIS, AND ON THE
COLOSSAL STRUCTURES OF A SIMILAR DESCRIPTION
ERECTED IN EGYPT. Page 1 to 38.

2. ON THE DAGON OF CHALDEA, ITS MARKED RESEM-
BLANCE TO THE MATSYA, OR FISH AVATAR, OF INDIA;
AND ON THE POWERFUL CORROBORATIVE EVIDENCE
AFFORDED BY THE THREE FIRST INDIAN AVATARS TO
THE SCRIPTURAL HISTORY OF THE DELUGE. p. 39 to 49.

3. ON THE GREAT GOLDEN IMAGE SET UP AT BARY-
LON BY NEBUCHADNEZZAR, AND THE IMMENSE TREA-
SURES, IN GOLDEN ORNAMENTS AND VASES, ANCIENTLY
CONTAINED IN THE TEMPLE OF BELUS. p. 49 to 74.

CONTENTS.

4. ON THE SUPERSTITIOUS RITES OF THE ANCIENT EGYPTIANS, AND PARTICULARLY ON THE NEFARIOUS WORSHIP PAID TO BEASTS, ESTEEMED SACRED, AND CALLED IN SCRIPTURE THE ABOMINATIONS OF EGYPT*. p. 74 to 187.
-
5. ON THE PRESUMED CHANGE OF THE COURSE OF THE RIVER EUPHRATES; THE CAUSES WHICH NECESSARILY INDUCED THAT CHANGE; AND THE CONSEQUENT DESTRUCTION OF BABYLON. p. 188 to 222.
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* The great length of this Dissertation on the ancient symbolical worship of Egypt, occupying alone above 100 pages of letter-press, will, it is hoped, be excused on account of the important argument, resulting from it, as stated towards the conclusion—"If a nation, so *proverbially wise* throughout antiquity as were the Egyptians, could descend to the baseness of worshipping, under whatever plea, the animals and objects above enumerated, how highly important, how indispensably necessary, was become a DIVINE REVELATION, to reclaim from such gross idolatries a degenerate and apostate world! Could this be the enlightened race who, first among the Heathens, taught in their schools the sublime dogma of the Immortality of the Soul?" &c. &c.—APPENDIX, p. 140.

A list of deities and animals, whose apparent *good* or *evil* qualities, extensively detailed in the pages of the APPENDIX, rendered them the object of superstitious veneration among the Ancient Egyptians.

DII MAJORES.

Cneph.
Osiris.
Isis.
Horus.
Typhon.

ZODIAC ANIMALS.

Ram.
Bull.
Lion.
Goat, or Kids.
Scorpion.

OTHER ANIMALS, AND OBJECTS.

Hawk.
Ibis.
Ichneumon.
Serpent.
Scarabæus.
Cat, Ælurus.
Dog, Anubis.
Eagle.
Falcon, or Vulture.
Stork.
Owl.
Phœnicopteros.
Asp.
Horned Adder.
Sphynx.
Wolf, or Hyæna.
Fox, or Jackall.

Cynocephalus.
Crocodile.
Hippopotamus.

FISHES.
Phagrus (Mullet.)
Latos (Perch.)
Oxyrinchus (Pike.)
Lepidotos (Carp.)

PLANTS.
Lotos.
Persea, or peach-tree.
Palm, or date-tree.
Colocasia, or bean.
Onion, or squill.
Garlick, &c. &c.

ERRATUM.

From mere inadvertence, in the prefatory part, the column, vulgarly called POMPEY'S PILLAR, is mentioned by the name of the Pillar of Severus, as the profoundly learned MICHAELIS, from Arabian authorities, contended it should be denominated ; the inscription upon it, however, recently discovered, and so creditably to the persevering zeal of our countrymen, incontestibly proves that pillar to have been erected in honour of DIOCLETIAN.

P R E F A C E.

A VERY large proportion of the subjects discussed in the following pages having relation to Egypt, I have to request the candid reader's attention to the apology urged by me, in a subsequent page*, for this apparent deviation from the subject, which is, properly, BABYLON. Constructed, originally, of the perishable materials of brick and bitumen, the Chaldæan metropolis has disappeared from the earth, and heaps of ruin only remain to mark the site. On the other hand, the Egyptians, having employed in the construction of their magnificent temples and palaces the indestructible granite, so abundantly produced in their country, the august remains of that magnificence and the science that erected them are still preserved for the admiration and philosophical research of posterity. The superstitions of the two nations being in many respects nearly similar, as being the descendants of the same idolatrous ancestor, it is necessary to make those of the one country a kind of comment on those of the other, and by the existing antiquities of Egypt to illustrate the fallen

* See Appendix, p. 27.

monuments of Babylon. This is more particularly necessary in regard to their sculpture and colossal images, as the taste was pretty much the same in respect to these articles in both countries ; so that, by the figures of remote antiquity now existing in Egypt, we may form some estimate of those constructed in Babylon. Much new light, also, having been thrown on the antiquities of Egypt by late travellers, both English and French, particularly in the *ÆGYPTIACA* of Mr. Hamilton, in my opinion the most acute and intelligent of them all, and by far the best classical scholar that has traversed Egypt since the time of Pococke, I have thought it proper to devote a few additional pages of this Appendix to the examination of them, with the aid of that newly-acquired information.

The French chronologers, when they speak of the foundation of Thebes, for reasons best known to themselves, are fond of assigning for that event the distant æra of *forty centuries* from the present time ; and that expression repeatedly occurs in all their lucubrations respecting Egypt. That remote period, which approaches so near to the deluge, can with difficulty be admitted by the rational historian, who, however, all things considered, even on the evidence supplied by scripture, cannot well fix the date of its construction many centuries later. For instance, we are informed (Genesis xli. 45) that Joseph was married to a daughter of the priest of *ON*, or of the *SUN*, at *Heliopolis*, which was in the *Delta*. At that period, then, or 1700 years before Christ, the whole of the vast system of

the Egyptian superstition was formed, the solar worship; and that of the zodiacal asterisms, symbolized by the sacred animals, engraved among the innumerable hieroglyphics that covered the famous obelisk and walls of the Heliopolitan temple. But Thebes, in Upper Egypt, is justly supposed to have been inhabited, and planetary adoration instituted in its rocky sanctuaries while as yet the Delta had not emerged from the ocean, or, to use the language of Herodotus and Diodorus Siculus, doubtless highly exaggerated, was not as yet formed by the accumulated mud and sand brought down from Æthiopia by the waters of the Nile. I shall not, however, in this place, anticipate what will occur on this subject, and on that of the *adoration of beasts*, deemed sacred, in the subsequent pages; but proceed to notice what, with the too apparent view of subverting the Bible chronology, and the Mosaic account of the deluge, DENON, in particular, has the presumption farther to advance.

This writer, then, asserts, that at Medinet-Abu, in the Thebais, when he was exploring its majestic ruins, he descended by means of a cavity, dug out by some previous visitor (probably for the treasures, supposed to have been concealed there) to a part of the edifice that seemed the most ancient of all, and *there*, at the very base of one of the principal pillars of the temple, he discovered foundation-stones on which were sculptured numerous hieroglyphics, as finely executed as those that decorated the external part of the building. These massy fragments served, like that with

P R E F A C E.

inverted hieroglyphics upon which the pillar of Severus stands, discovered by Wortley Montague, as the basement of that ancient temple. “From this circumstance,” the astonished Frenchman exclaims, “how great must be the antiquity of edifices thus supported, and thus decorated—how many preceding ages of civilization would it require to enable the Egyptians to erect such buildings—how many ages must have elapsed before these would have fallen into ruins, and serve as materials for the foundation of other temples, which themselves have stood for such a long revolution of centuries—the annals of this wonderful country are mysterious, obscure, and infinite*.”

For the insidious poison intended to be diffused by these remarks, an antidote may be found in the consideration, that it is impossible to ascertain with any approximation to precision, the original date of these superb edifices, in many of which, though of undoubted Egyptian fabrication, according to the observation of the French themselves, may be found architectural remains, in style and character apparently several hundred years different.

Mr. Hamilton, who, in his progress through the Delta and the Thebais, surveyed them all with a discriminating eye, states that difference in some instances as, in his opinion, exceeding a thousand years. Indeed, he uses very plausible arguments for assigning to some of them so low a date as the æra of the Ptolemyies.

* Denon's Travels, vol. iii. p. 78, London edition.

These conjectures, therefore, seem altogether as baseless as those of his countryman, M. Dupuis, (so triumphantly repeated by Volney in his “*RUINS,*”) who, with similar views, has asserted that the signs of the zodiac must at least be 16,000 years old, because there are many *probable* arguments to shew that Libra was formerly the sign of the vernal, and Aries of the autumnal, equinox; or, in other words, that since the origin of astronomy the precession of the equinoxes had carried forward, by seven signs, the primitive order of the zodiac. These exaggerated statements—not at all confirmed by any evidence that can be collected from the DENDERA zodiac, which, in that able astronomer, M. De la Lande’s opinion, could not have been formed at a more remote period than twelve hundred years before Christ—only serve to prove to us with what ease, and to what distant periods, it is in the power of skilful astronomers and presumptuous chronologers to carry up their retrospective calculations, and to form suppositious æras of unfathomable antiquity, existing only in imagination.

Another attempted solution of the chronological difficulty (if any *real* difficulty exist) should not be omitted to be mentioned on this occasion. It will readily be conceded to the sceptical investigator of Egyptian antiquities, that many ages must have elapsed before the necessary instruments could be invented, by which these masses were hewn from their granite beds, or those finer ones of the purest steel, by which they were engraved with the curious and varied hieroglyphics which we see carved upon

P R E F A C E.

their surface—many more, before that system itself of hieroglyphic designation, could have been formed by the ingenuity of a speculative priesthood. The same fact may, with truth, be averred in relation to their advance in astronomical and other sciences; at least, in respect to all that was of a practical nature in those sciences. No more effectual method of obviating these difficulties occurs to me, than by adopting in this case—as was done by myself amid the perplexities that occurred while engaged on the History of Ancient India, and in doing which I only followed the example of many eminent writers, my predecessors in the field of oriental history—than by adopting, I say, the **SEPTUAGINT**, instead of the common *Hebrew*, chronology, since the former gives us a period of nearly 1000 years more for the maturity of arts and sciences from the flood to Abraham than the latter; beyond which period—whatever French scepticism may dream of an immense series of elapsed ages—no reflecting writer would, I presume, venture to carry the æra of the Egyptian empire. I must here be permitted to repeat a remark there made, that it is not for *a few centuries* merely that Christianity wages the war with infidelity, but she cannot allow of *imaginary millions* being thrown into the scale.

Setting aside these sceptical speculations, it would be ungenerous to deny the members of the French Institute their due share of praise. Very imperfect, indeed, were the accounts given to us of Egypt and its antiquities previous to the visits of our modern

travellers. They have traversed regions untrodden by Pococke and Norden ; they have penetrated into those hallowed recesses, those chambers consecrated to eternal darkness, where the profoundest mysteries of the Egyptian religion were anciently celebrated ; they have enlarged to our view the horizon of Egyptian knowledge ; delineated their zodiacs, and thrown new light upon their hieroglyphics : in a word, they are the best possible comment upon the celebrated work of Plutarch de *Iside et Osiride*, and those of other Greek writers, who have made the complicated system of the Egyptian *mythology* the subject of their profound investigations. In those designs, too, copied from the living rock, we see illustrated most of the *historical* accounts given us by Herodotus and Diodorus Siculus of a race, from all antiquity, illustrious in arts and arms, whose monarchs, to encourage agriculture, disdained not to wield a plough for their sceptre*, and round the breast of whose inflexible judges was suspended, by a golden chain, the sacred image of immutable TRUTH, beaming its unsullied splendors from the centre of encircling gems†.

One thing, however, is still deeply to be regretted, that after all the scientific researches of travellers of either nation, no *certain* vestiges have been yet discovered of the celebrated SOLSTITIAL WELL,

* Sceptrum gerunt (*reges*) in formam aratri factum. Diod. Sic. lib. iii. p. 145, edit. Rhod.

† See again Diod. Sic. ibid.

‡ Strabo, lib. xvii. p. 816.

mentioned by Strabo as in his time existing at Syene ; that well, which, according to him, was sunk to mark precisely the period of the summer solstice, on that day, *when the stile of the sun-dial, at noon, casts no shadow* ; on that day, when the beam of the vertical sun, darting directly to the bottom of the well, the entire image of its orb was reflected from the surface of the illumined water. This failure is the more to be lamented, as ages may elapse before so favourable an opportunity for exploring that remote region may again occur.

Notwithstanding this and some other disappointments, much substantial good has been accomplished ; much solid glory has resulted to them from their persevering efforts ; and a strong light has been reflected on oriental history and antiquities. With these additional aids to guide us, it seems necessary to *review* what we have learned in our younger days respecting that most ancient and wonderful people, so connected as they were by birth and superstition with the objects of our inquiry at Babylon. The reader, therefore, may not be displeased, in these pages, to find condensed into a moderate compass nearly all that is important, in a mythological point of view, which the ancients have written concerning that land of mystery, and the causes of their *insane* worship, as it appears to us, of *birds, beasts, and reptiles*, called in scripture *the abomination of Egypt*, perspicuously, but briefly, unfolded.

Plutarch, towards the beginning of the valuable work just mentioned, has judiciously observed, that the religious rites and cere-

monies of the Egyptians were all intended to preserve the memory of some valuable piece of history, or represent to us some of the phænomena of nature ; and the justice of this observation was never more decisively proved than in their allegory of the march of Osiris to *conquer*, that is, to *reform* and *civilize*, the nations of the earth. He commences his march, attended by Hermes the god of eloquence and science, by Pan the god of music, and all the nine muses ; and his travels, it will be remembered, are invariably from *east* to *west*, like the march of the sun, displaying to us the gradual progress of knowledge and improvement in the infant world. These mighty feats were afterwards transferred to the great **SESOSTRIS**, and the allegorical victories of the Solar Orb, in its bright career of glory, over rugged nature, and atmospheric monsters, have assumed the garb of regular history. That such a man as **SESOSTRIS** once existed, cannot reasonably be doubted : the records of a thousand monuments proclaim the fact : but the accounts of his innumerable army, and the astonishing multitude of his chariots armed for war, together with those of his conquests of Bactria and India, may well be reckoned *apocryphal*. But, independently of any exploits of Sesostris, whatever conquests the Egyptians might have made, *out of Africa*, have probably been greatly exaggerated by their vain-glorious historians ; for its ancient sovereigns, it must be supposed, had sufficient employment at home, in raising those vast dykes, and constructing those mag-

P R E F A C E.

nificent canals, so necessary in some places to restrain, and in others to distribute, the waters of the inundating river.

With this explanation of Plutarch kept constantly in remembrance, our own march through that wonderful country, that enchanted labyrinth, will become gradually less perplexed, and the prospect more cheerful and interesting. Egypt, in fact, was the land of mystery, and the priests were an allegorical and metaphysical race ; but where that mystery can be penetrated, which however is not always the case, we are, in general, well repaid for the labour of investigation.

As no respectable artist could be found to engrave the large plate of the Babylonian zodiac, intended for this Appendix, without a ruinous expense to the author, I have been compelled to omit it ; but have substituted in its place the ancient zodiac of Egypt, full as curious, and perhaps more elucidatory, than the former, of the generality of subjects discussed in this volume. To this another curious engraving, highly illustrative of oriental mythology, has been added, by way of frontispiece ; and, in consequence of these circumstances, and a large addition to the letter-press, it is impossible to accommodate the Subscribers with this volume at a less charge than that of the former—**A GUINEA.** In books of mythological research, *where engravings are necessary*, it will be candidly considered, that the exact magnitude, or price, of the volume, can scarcely ever be invariably ascertained.

ADDENDA TO PREFACE.

As, in describing the sacred ceremonial rites of the Egyptians, those of the *Hebrews* are so often alluded to, I beg permission, as my best apology, to present the reader with the following passage from Mr. Hamilton's *ÆGYPTIACA*, which will at once serve as a specimen of that writer's animated manner of treating the important subjects which he discusses, and demonstrate the necessity of occasional allusion to the ancient ritual and early scientific attainments of that wonderful people. Speaking of the august remains of the temple of PHILÆ, he observes—

“ No part of any of the existing monuments of Egypt is so well calculated to give to a traveller an adequate idea of their magnificence, as the portico of this temple, which consisted of twelve columns, four in front, and three deep. The capitals represent varied forms and compositions of the palm-branch, the domm-leaf, and the lotus. These, as well as the sculptures on the columns, the ceiling, and the walls, have been painted in the most vivid colours, still glowing in little less than their original perfection ; and there is every reason to believe that the same was the case with the sculptures in the interior of this, as well as the other temples, though the damps and nitrous quality of the confined

air have entirely destroyed the colours. It is impossible to conceive a more magnificent scene than that which the whole assemblage of these painted sculptures, combined with the grand effect of the architecture, must have produced when perfect. It was in temples of this description that the Egyptian priests lavished their treasures, and that the Jews first learned to make the likeness of every thing that was in heaven and earth, or in the waters under the earth ; that they learned to bow down and worship their gods of silver and their gods of gold, which they could not help sighing after even amidst the horrors of the desert. It was a recollection of this sensual, fascinating worship that made all the people, at the command of Aaron, tear the ear-rings from their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, with which he was to make the Golden Calf ; and the impressions made by a residence of above 400 years were too strong ever to be entirely forgotten, as long as they existed as a nation.” p. 48.

Beautiful and elaborate as are the decorations of the splendid work of DENON, I confess that I have derived from the expressive ETCHINGS in Mr. Hamilton’s book a more correct idea of the varied antiquities of Egypt than from all the laboured ornamental designs of the French artists. A British publication of such distinguished merit, and designs executed by the rapid but masterly pencil of a brave young officer, who perished in the bloom of life, a victim to his patriotic exertions, under a burning sky, should, one would think, have excited, in a more particular manner, an

interest in a BRITISH public ; but, on the whole, if I am rightly informed, neither have had that attention paid to them, which the zeal and assiduous labour of our classical countryman and his accomplished friend ought to have obtained for them.

I cannot avoid, in this place, remarking that the circumstance mentioned by Pococke, and noticed in page 19 of this Appendix, that the quarries about Elephantine, in Upper Egypt, *principally* supplied the materials for the immense number of obelisks and colossal images dispersed through Egypt, is fully confirmed by this respectable writer, as well as the subsequent statement of columns half cut and rounded, as if ready to be detached from their rocky bed, and transported to their several stations, being still to be seen on the sides of the river. “The granite quarries of Syene have been long celebrated, and sufficient vestiges of them are still preserved, to render it credible that they furnished the materials for the colossal monuments of Egypt. They are scattered about, at the foot of the mountains to the East, and some of them are close to the river. The marks of the chisels and drills are plainly to be seen, as well as of the wedges, with which, when the sides were cleared, the blocks were started from their beds. The ground about it is covered with quarried pieces of granite, and in one quarry we found a half-finished obelisk, between 70 and 80 feet long, and 10 feet wide, which was about to be converted into several smaller blocks. In other places are unfinished columns, sarcophagi, &c. ; and here and there we could perceive the marks

of immense blocks, thirty and forty feet in length, having been separated from the rock." p. 69.

Before I close my remarks on Mr. Hamilton's work, I must beg to observe that, from that gentleman's having been so fortunate as to discover amid the ruins of SAN, (the ancient *Sais*) a colossal statue of a male sphinx, evident, by the *beard* which it exhibits, an opinion suggested by astronomical reasons respecting that symbol in p. 94 of this Appendix, is greatly strengthened; for, to use his own words, "it may be considered as affording a reasonable presumption against the common idea, that the combination of the *woman's* head with the *lion's* body was emblematic of the rising of the Nile when the sun was passing from Leo to Virgo. Herodotus says, that Amasis placed in or near the temple of Minerva at Sais several Androsphinxes, of an enormous height. They probably resembled this which we saw at San. As yet I do not know that any travellers have discovered any remains of them among the ruins of Sais." p. 382.

The reason of my noticing this fact so particularly is, that it carries us on one step farther in tracing out the analogy already hinted at as subsisting between the Indian and Egyptian mythology, since the **MAN-LION** is well known to my Indian readers, as forming the fourth of the *nine* avatars; and having, as I flatter myself, demonstrated the identity of the Matsya and Dagon emblematical figures; having shewn the near resemblance between the Vara, or boar avatar, and the Canis Anubis of Egypt, and

also the possible connection of Veeshnu in the Courma or tortoise, and Hermes with his Testudo, of which the strings, it will be remembered, were made out of the sinews of Typhon (*deluge*), —a symbol compounded of a male of the human species and that monster, like the Androsphinx, was alone wanting to complete the parallel of nearly all the Indian incarnations. For that the arrogant Bali of the fifth avatar was the great Assyrian Belus, the lord of the Higher Asia, additional proofs to those formerly adduced by me, will be found in the subsequent pages ; and in respect to the two RAMAS, the renowned conquerors of the sixth and seventh Avatars, their history under the names of Cush and Rama, and of the colonies descended from them, is perhaps better known in Egypt (the *Cushadweepa* of the Puranas) than even in India itself. The adventures of the wonderful Creeshna in the *eighth* are now, by the best mythologists, for the most part, referred to the Sun contending, like Osiris, with the monsters constellated in and near the zodiac ; and the *ninth* avatar, or that of Buddha, has been demonstrated, I think, to have been the same person as the celebrated Egyptian SACYA, or Sesac, called, in Sanscrit, Sacya-Sinha, or the lion of Sacya, who flourished, as a conqueror and legislator, a thousand or twelve hundred years before Christ*.

* See a Dissertation, by the President, on the Indian Chronology. *Asiat. Research.* vol. ii. p. 401.

ADDENDA TO PREFACE.

Much of ancient history, as before observed, but more of that extravagant allegory so congenial to the manners of the east, prevails through all these details, and under the names of Osiris, Rammesses, Dionysos, &c. we have not only the revolutions of the celestial orbs, but of the earliest terrestrial empires. Thus has the statement of Sir W. Jones, in his earlier dissertations, when discussing the subject of a colony of emigrated Egyptians having anciently settled at Tirhut, in North Bahar, been established, viz. that a considerable portion of the Assyrian and Egyptian history has been engrafted on that of the Hindoos, and his prediction in great part verified, "that, by means of the Puranas, we should in time discover all the learning of Egypt, without the necessity of decyphering her hieroglyphics*."

* Discourse on the Gods of Greece, Italy, and India, vol. i. p. 254.

A P P E N D I X.

OBSERVATIONS RESPECTING THE OBELISK SAID, BY DIODORUS, TO HAVE BEEN HEWN, IN ONE SOLID MASS, OUT OF THE ARMENIAN MOUNTAINS, AND SET UP IN BABYLON; —ARGUMENTS ADDUCED FOR ITS HAVING BEEN USED BY THE ASTRONOMICAL RACE OF CHALDÆA, AS A VAST GNOMON.

OF the immense number of columnar structures, various in design and magnitude, erected in ancient times throughout the eastern world, but more particularly in Egypt, the OBELISK under consideration was probably the *prototype*; as the Tower of Belus undoubtedly was of those wonderful pyramidal masses that, even at this day, exalt their summits in awful, though decayed, grandeur. To the elder branch of the idolatrous sons of Ham, settled on the banks of the Euphrates, these honours (if honours they may be called) are decidedly due. That those of Egypt were employed, as the fabled pillars of Seth are said to have been, to contain the mystic hieroglyphical literature, of which they have indeed been

the faithful but inexplicable depositories to this remote period, cannot be denied; at the same time, that their form and engraved emblems prove them to be consecrated to the idolatrous worship of the country—to that sun, of whose beams we have already proved them to be symbolical—*OBELISCOS, solis numini sacratos!* The formidable race of Cuthites, the giants and Titans of pagan antiquity, from whom both the Egyptians and Chaldæans were descended, delighted in whatever was vast and astonishing. It was equally their glory and their occupation, as I have observed in another work, “to erect edifices of stupendous height and magnitude; to excavate long subterraneous passages from the living rock; to form vast lakes; to construct magnificent aqueducts and bridges; in short, to attempt whatever was hazardous and difficult; and to carry into execution whatever appeared to the rest of mankind impracticable. Asia and Africa were alike covered with these wonders in sculpture and prodigies in art, which their daring genius and persevering industry executed. It was they who built the Tower of Belus and raised the pyramids of Egypt; it was they who formed the grottoes near the Nile, and scooped out the caverns of Salsette and Elephanta. Their skill in mechanical powers, to this day, astonishes posterity, who are unable to conceive by what means stones, thirty, forty, and even sixty, feet in length and from twelve to twenty feet in breadth, could ever be reared to that wonderful point of elevation at which they were seen, by Pococke and Norden, in the superb but ruined temples of

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the Thebais. Those that compose the pagodas of India are scarcely less wonderful in magnitude and elevation, and they evidently display the bold architecture of the same indefatigable artificers.” Indian Antiquities, vol. v. p. 118.

In regard to the particular obelisk under consideration, the account of Diodorus is as follows : Semiramis, he informs us, ordered an immense pyramidal stone to be hewn out of the mountains of Armenia, 130 feet in length, and 25 feet square at the basis ; this she caused to be conveyed to the banks of the river Euphrates, by the help of innumerable yokes of oxen, whence, by means of rafts, proportioned to the weight of such a column, it was transported down the stream to Babylon. There it was erected in the most conspicuous part of the city, the astonishment of all beholders ! and for ages was accounted one of the wonders of the world*. Of this great spiral pillar, notice is decisively taken in the ancient *puranas*, or sacred books of India. They were all symbolical of that impure phallic worship which constantly attended the solar ritual, the nefarious rites of the great Jupiter Generator ; and known through Asia under a hundred different denominations. “The phallic worship,” says Mr. Wilford †, “originated in the country watered by the *Cumudvati*, or the *Euphrates* ; and the first phallus, under the name of BALESWARA LINGA ‡, was erected on its banks. This is con-

* Diod. Sic. lib. ii. cap. 1. p. 125.

† Asiatic Researches, vol. iv. p. 378.

‡ i. e. BELUS ESWARA, the lord or king Belus.

firmed by Diodorus Siculus, who says that Semiramis brought an OBELISK from the mountains of Armenia, and erected it in the most conspicuous part of Babylon ; it was 180 feet high, and is reckoned by the same author as one of the wonders of the world."

Diodorus, also, on the authority of Ctesias, further informs us that the same ambitious princess, marching into Media, ordered mount Bagisthan, a rugged rock of vast height and dimensions, to be made smooth, and afterwards caused herself, attended by one hundred of her guards, to be cut deep on its surface : she is said, also, to have ordered to be engraved upon it *an inscription in Syriac characters.* In her progress through the higher Asia, she is described as performing similar prodigies ; levelling mountains and raising vallies, planting gardens upon rocks, and building cities in deserts, till she had accomplished the undertaking she had in view, of making an unobstructed path through those mountainis, which, in the age of Diodorus, was still called SEMIRAMIS'S WAY. With the truth or falsehood of these latter statements, I am little concerned ; but, on the respectable authority of Moses Chorenensis, an historian greatly esteemed by Sir W. Jones, who pays a very high compliment to his veracity, and from his history of Armenia, I am able to prove that the records of her mighty acts in that country remained still unimpaired, when that history was composed about a century before Christ. As the history of this book is rather curious, and the author less known than he ought to be, the reader may be pleased with the annexed account of it, abridged

from the learned author himself, in the eighth chapter of his first book.

About the year before Christ 130, a learned person, named Maribas, of Catina, in Syria, was sent by the reigning sovereign of Armenia to his brother Arsaces the second, king of Parthia, who then ruled the Assyrian Empire, with a letter requesting him to give him access to the royal library at Nineveh, that he might transcribe from the Assyrian records the history of the Armenian kings. In searching the library, Maribas found a book, which contained the history of the most ancient Asiatic kings. This book, as appeared from an inscription at the beginning of it, was, by the command of Alexander the Great, translated out of the Chaldee tongue into Greek, (which shews that the history it contained was really extracted from the Assyrian records at Nineveh,) and deposited in the royal library. Maribas wrote out of this book, in Syriac and Greek, what related to the history of the Armenian kings, from Haic and Belus king of Babylon down to the reign of Sardanapalus, and lower; and presented his book to Valarsaces, king of Armenia, who laid it up in his palace at Nisibis*. From this history of Maribas, it should appear, and the fact seems extremely probable, that Nineveh, after the destruction of it by the Medes and Babylonians, so as to be no more the seat of the Assyrian Empire, was yet restored to some

* Hist. Armen. lib. i. cap. 8. p. 23, edit. Londini, 1736.

degree of eminency ; and that the Assyrian records were still kept in a royal library there.

From this history of Maribas, at a subsequent period, Moses of Choren, a learned Armenian archbishop, compiled his Armenian history, which, though like all other ancient histories, mixed with many fables, is yet thought to contain a considerable portion of authentic historical information, respecting the early annals not only of that country, but of Asia itself. It describes both the Armenian nation and language as of Assyrian origin, in which latter we have seen the rudiments of their history were recorded. Sir. W. Jones, in his eighth anniversary discourse to the Asiatic Society, does not widely dissent from this hypothesis, when he considers them as forming part of the great Iranian nation, once so potent, and the language anciently prevalent among them as a dialect of the Zend. The present Armenian language, in which this work of Moses is written, is comparatively of modern date : it was translated into Latin by the sons of the famous William Whiston, and published at London, in quarto, in 1736. The fifteenth chapter of the first book is full of the details of the exploits of Semiramis, similar to those above related in that mountainous region, where are found quarries of the finest stone, and in particular of that beautiful stone specifically called, by mineralogists, *Armenian*, and of a bright blue colour, much resembling *lapis lazuli*, but is of a softer substance, and consequently more easily cut. It is decidedly classed by naturalists among the ores of copper. If the obelisk in ques-

tion were composed of this stone, which is not an improbable conjecture, it might well be esteemed, what it has been denominated, one of the *wonders of the world*.

This custom of rearing immense sculptures of their gods and themselves, and of pillars recording their exploits, seems to have been very early predominant among the princes of Asia. The stupendous works at Elephanta and Elora demonstrate this fact in regard to India: those at Naxi Rostam, in Media, in respect to Persia. Sesostris, wheresoever he travelled and spread the stream of his conquests, raised these pillars, descriptive of the valour or cowardice of the nations conquered. The walls of the Egyptian temples and palaces were covered with this kind of sculpture, recording the feats of their ancient kings; while the plains have their Memnonian statues and their mystic figures of Osiris and the Sphynx. Some of the more distinguished of these shall presently be noticed, as from thence the strongest light will be reflected on our Babylonian obelisk. Bruce traced similar vast images of Anubis, or Sirius, amidst the ruins of Axum, in Abyssinia. Those erected in honour of the sun were the largest, loftiest, and of the most valuable materials; witness the golden image of Nebuchadnezzar, and the brazen colossus of Rhodes, both sacred to the solar orb. Dinocrates, who built Alexandria, to immortalize Alexander, with this view, it is well known, proposed to carve mount Athos into a statue of that prince, a mountain two miles in height, according to Gassendus, and which at the summer solstice

was said to project its shadow upon the isle of Lemnos, eighty-seven miles distant. There is, in the Asiatic Researches, in a Dissertation on **CAUCASUS**, by Mr. Wilford, a description of some gigantic sculptures, indeed of a whole city, cut out of a rock, the origin and history of which seems to go back almost to the time of Semiramis, on whose Persian empire they bordered, if they did not form a part of it. This city, called Bamyan, is situated near the foot of mount Caucasus, and is eight manzils or days journey from Cabul. Mr. Wilford denominates it the Thebes of the east ; a city formed of masses of rock, resembling temples. After giving a copious description of these rock-temples, which are, by the present inhabitants, supposed to have been constructed by the progenitors of the human race, he thus proceeds :

“ But what never fails to attract the notice of travellers, are two colossal statues, which are seen at a great distance. They are erect, and adhere to the mountain, from which they were cut out. They are in a sort of niches, the depth of which is equal to the thickness of the statues. It is said, in the Ayeen-Akbery, that the largest is eighty ells high, and the other only fifty. These dimensions are greatly exaggerated, according to the opinion of all the travellers I have seen, and the disproportion is not so great between the two. According to the author of the Pharangh-Jehanghiri, cited by Dr. Hyde, they are said to be only fifty cubits high ; which appears to be the true dimensions. At some distance from these two statues, is another of a smaller size, being about fifteen cubits high.

Natives and Persian authors, who have mentioned them, agree neither about their sex nor their names. The few Hindus, who live in these countries, say, that they represent Bhim and his consort : the followers of Buddha, that they are the statues of Shamama, and his disciple Salsala. The Musulmans insist, that they are the statues of Caiumuras and his consort, that is to say, Adam and Eve ; and that the third is intended for Seish or Seth, their son ; whose tomb, or at least the place where it stood formerly, is shewn near Bahlac. This is in some measure confirmed by the author of the Pharangh-Jehanghiri, who says, that these statues existed in the time of Noah ; though he gives them different names, and supposes the third to represent an old woman, called Nesr, more generally represented with the countenance of a vulture. These statues are so much defaced, through the injury of all-devouring Time, and the intolerant zeal of the Musulmans, that I believe it is difficult to ascertain their sex. Travellers do, however, agree that one of them at least is a beardless youth ; some more particularly insist that the swelling of the breasts is remarkably obvious, and that both look towards the east, so that, when the sun rises, they seem to smile, but look gloomy in the evening. Their dress, as described to me, is much the same with that of the two figures, half buried at Tuct-Rustum near Istacar, in Persia ; with this difference, that the female figure has no head dress ; but the male has such a tiara as is worn by the supposed female figure at Tuct-Rustum.

“ These statues were visited, at least ten or twelve different times,

by a famous traveller, called Meyan-Asod-Shah, who is a man highly respected, both on account of his descent from Mohammed, and his personal character. He is well informed, in affluent circumstances, through the piety of the faithful, and keeps company with the princes of the country and persons of the first rank. He informed me lately, that these two statues are in two different niches, and about forty paces distant from each other. That the drapery is covered with embroidery and figured work; which formerly was painted of different colours; traces of which are all still visible. That one seems to have been painted of a red colour: and the other, either retains the original colour of the stone, or was painted grey. That one certainly represents a female, from the beauty and smoothness of her features, and the swelling of her breasts: the head being so much elevated, is secure from insult below, and is also protected from the weather by the projection above. The statue of their supposed son is nearly half a mile distant, and about twenty feet high. One of the legs of the male figure is much broken; for the Musulmans never march that way with cannon without firing two or three shots at them: but, from their want of skill, they seldom do much mischief. Aurungzebe, it is said, in his expedition to Bahlac, in the year 1646, passed that way, and ordered as usual a few shots to be fired. According to Dr. Hyde, one of these statues is called Surkh-But, or the red idol; the other Khink-But, or the grey idol. As to their being hollow, I believe, it is an idle tale: at least the travellers, I have consulted, knew

nothing of it. Between the legs of the male figure, is a door leading into a most spacious temple, the dimensions of which, they could not describe otherwise, than by saying, that it could easily hold the camp-equipage and baggage of Zeman-shah, and of his whole army. It is remarkable only for its extraordinary dimensions ; it is dark and gloomy ; and there are a few niches, with the remains of some figures in *alto-relievo**. ”

There also exist at this day, according to D'Ancarville †, in the caverns of a mountain now called **BISUTOUN KOH**, in ancient Media, a series of Colossal sculptures, cut in the rock, very much resembling, in size and structure, these ascribed by Diodorus to Semiramis, and which, in his time, probably went by her name. They are, also, particularly mentioned by Isidore of Charax, and are described as consisting of three principal figures ; the first, wearing a tiara on his head, and arrayed in royal habiliments, is considered as a **KING** ; the second, being a female figure and with royal insignia, is taken for his **QUEEN** ; and the third figure seems to be an officer attendant in his train. Other figures, of a colossal kind, are also carved in the rock around, and though it might be presumptuous to assert that these images were carved to represent Ninus, Semiramis, and her guards, both the antiquity and the celebrity of these sculptures tend greatly to corroborate the supposition.

* Asiatic Researches, vol. vi. p. 467.

† D'Ancarville's Researches, vol. i. p. 123.

It is, on many accounts, a circumstance by no means to be regretted, that the ancient Egyptians and Iranians, in their architectural designs, made use of such massy materials, and raised such colossal monuments, as rendered them almost indestructible, since they have, by that means, and their deeply engraved sculptures, preserved for us the memorial of many things that would otherwise have been inevitably lost in the lapse of so many ages. Among these may be numbered the degree of their own advance in arts and sciences ; the religious, agricultural, and warlike, implements used in those distant periods ; and the zodiacal and other astronomical objects engraved aloft in their temples : At Persepolis are evidently observed not only the emblems of the ancient Mithriac superstition ; but also the costumes of the Medes and other Asiatics. The sword, or large dagger in the hand of the principal deity, with six arms, in the cavern of Elephanta, according to D'Ancarville*, who contends for the congenial antiquity of that cavern-temple, marks the remote æra at which the science of metallurgy was in use among the Indians.

In another very important point also, it has proved most fortunate for posterity that the ancients preserved the record of illustrious deeds on tablets of such a durable construction : I mean in respect to the history and primeval annals of ancient kingdoms. That inordinate ambition which, on various occasions, led the an-

* D'Ancarville's Researches, vol. i. p. 122.

cient conquerors of the Asiatic world, to destroy the archives of the nations subjugated by them, in order to obliterate the remembrance of all great achievements, except their own, has been the fatal occasion of the loss of a great part of the records of those distant ages. Thus, Nabonassar, who gave his name to the great æra of the Assyrian empire, is said to have destroyed those of his predecessors on the throne of Babylon ; Cambyses, on his fatal irruption into Egypt, gave the records of her empire to the devouring flame ; and the Greeks did the same to those of the Persian dynasties before the irruption of Alexander.

Those tablets of eternal granite, therefore, merit our most attentive consideration. Those colossal statues, though dumb and mutilated, still speak to the eye and ear of the philosopher. They are the awful monuments of a great nation sunk in eternal oblivion ; or only remembered by these monuments. It will not be mispent time to attend a little longer to their solemn admonition, in regard to the utter futility of every human effort to obtain immortality, and enumerate the most distinguished of those recorded for their magnitude and importance on the page of history. To erect them, and the obeliscal columns under consideration, seems to have been the prevailing taste of those primitive ages ; and in this retrospect, the classical reader cannot fail of first calling to his recollection the account given by Pliny *, in describing the antiquities of

* Pliny Nat. Hist. lib. xxxi. cap. 7.

Egypt, of the great colossal statue of Memmon, or rather, I should say, the colossal statue erected by Memmon in honour of the sun; for thus the best decyphers of the Egyptian theology interpret the mysterious symbol. Since Pliny declares it was placed in the temple of Serapis at Thebes†, it was probably intended to represent that deity himself, who, Jablonski informs us, was a symbol of the *sun in autumn*; and every morning, on feeling the warm impulsive ray of its bright original in the heavens, this statue, we are told, uttered a vocal sound of salutation. The superior part of this noble image was dashed to pieces by the same implacable victor, (Cambyses,) who plundered the sepulchre of Osymandes of the great golden astronomical circle, a cubit in breadth, and 365 cubits in circumference, to mark the days of the solar year. The height of this statue, when perfect, from the dimensions of the foot, which was seven cubits in length, is conjectured to have been fifty feet, even in its sitting posture, and may have given the idea to Nebuchadnezzar, who when in Egypt had probably visited the Thebais, of erecting a still loftier image, and of nobler materials to *his God*, also the Sun, that the Assyrian Belus might eclipse in glory the Egyptian Osiris. The dimensions, too, of the stupendous Sphynx, and the statue of Vulcan at Memphis, in this survey, should not be forgotten, nor those of the vast

† In Thebis delubro Serapis, ut putant, Memnonis statua dicata, quem quotidiano folis ortu contactum radiis crepare dicunt.—Ibid.

brazen Colossus of Rhodes, another statue of the Sun, and exceeding 100 feet in altitude, whose very fragments, after its subversion by an earthquake, loaded no less than 900 camels. Our present concern, however, is with the obelisks of antiquity ; to the consideration of which, and the various uses to which they were applied, we now return.

According to the preceding computation, in respect to the settling of nations, this obelisk of Semiramis should be the most ancient in the world. The next in order seem to be those erected at Heliopolis, the city of the Sun, who had there a superb temple ; and these obelisks, each composed of one solid block of granite, are said to have been 100 cubits in height, by a very little exceeding that of the Assyrian. The erection of these is by some imputed to Sesostris, and by others to his son Rameses. The hieroglyphic characters engraved upon one of them were attempted to be translated into Greek by Hermapion, a native of Egypt, and that translation is to be found in the history of Ammianus Marcellinus*. As the authenticity of the whole, however, is much doubted by Mountfaucon, it is not worthy of entire insertion, although a portion of it, by way of specimen, shall hereafter be presented to the reader. It principally consists of a blasphemous address to the sun, as the Supreme Creator, and a fulsome adulation of the founder, as the

* Ammian. Marcell. lib. xvii. p. 162.

son of that sun. One of these obelisks, according to Pliny, was transported by Augustus to Rome, and erected by him in the Campus Martius. At the period of the sack of Rome by the Goths it was thrown down, and lay buried for ages under the ruins of that city ; but was at length found, and reared again by that magnificent patron of the sciences, Sextus V. aided by the skill and exertions of that other glory of his age, Fontana, who employed in this great work no less than 600 men and 140 horses. The same Pliny also (lib. xxxvi. cap. 9.) mentions an obelisk of extraordinary dimensions, erected by king Rameses at Thebes, upon which for a long time 20,000 men were employed, and for the safe elevation of which he was so extremely anxious, that he caused his own son to be fastened to the summit of it, in order that the engineers employed on that service might act with more caution in the rearing of it. He increases our idea of its superior majesty and beauty, by telling us that, after Cambyses had set fire to that metropolis, when he saw the flames approaching that column, he ordered the flames to be extinguished that it might not be injured; thus paying that respect to a great pile of stone, which he had denied to a whole city and its slaughtered inhabitants. Whatever credit may be due to this romantic story, we are assured by Diodorus, that Sesostris erected at Thebes two obelisks 120 cubits in height, inscribed with an account of his victorious exploits in Asia, the number of the forces which he commanded, of the nations he subdued, and the amount of tribute which they paid. It was the

inscription upon one of these columns that Germanicus, when in Egypt, commanded the Egyptian priest who attended him to explain ; and the priest from that authentic tablet “ informed him that formerly there had been in that city seven hundred thousand men fit to bear arms ; and that with this army Sesostris subdued Libya, Æthiopia, the Medes and Persians, the Bactrians, the Scythians, the Syrians, &c. &c. There was also enumerated upon it the tribute which each nation paid; the weight of gold and silver ; and the number of arms and horses ; the donations of ivory and odours to the temples ; and the quantity of corn and all other necessaries which were contributed respectively by the subjugated nations *.” There were other obelisks in almost every city of Egypt, containing inscriptions that recorded the military renown of the ancient Egyptian kings. We know, too, from Herodotus, that even the great pyramid bore inscribed upon its surface the account of the money expended during the period of its construction ; and that not less than “one thousand six hundred talents of silver were laid out on account of the workmen, merely for parsley, onions, and garlick †.” There was, also, a more important use to which the obelisks were applied : they were the depositaries of their attainments in the arts and sciences, of their system of morals and philosophy ; and though dumb to us, they instructed an

* Tacit. Annal. lib. ii. cap. 60.

† Herodotus, lib. ii. cap. 125.

ancient race, who diffused that instruction throughout the world : they instructed Phythagoras, and Plato, and the other sages of Greece. In short, if no other advantage had resulted to science than that, by fixing so accurately, as the Egyptians have done, the position of the pyramids, we are enabled to ascertain that no variation has taken place in the direction of the poles, that alone to astronomers would have been an inestimable benefit.

But how—it will again be asked—how were these immense masses hewn out of their granite beds? With what instruments were they fabricated into spires and columns? How were they transported from their distant quarries to their destined stations? how in that infancy of mechanic science was that immense chapel, that monoly the chamber, said to have been cut entire out of the solid rock, and to have been placed in the vestibule of the temple of Minerva at Sais, conveyed thither from the island of Elephantine, whence it was excavated, and where it was formed?

In order to solve this difficulty, which on every side assails us, during this retrospect towards the ancient annals of Chaldaea and Egypt, we must have recourse to the hypothesis, respectfully submitted to the reader in the former portion of this work. The absolute necessity, indeed, of assenting to the system, that admits a mixture of a portion, at least, of ante-diluvian with post-diluvian science, is in no instance, and on no occasion, more evident than on the present ; as undoubtedly a knowledge to a certain degree of the operations of metallurgy and the principles of mechanics must

have preceded the excavation and rearing of these obelisks. Without the admission of this hypothesis, the performance of these mighty works, attributed both to Babylonians and Egyptians, at this early period after the deluge, is utterly incredible ; since, otherwise, a long succession of ages must have necessarily rolled away before they could have fabricated instruments and machines adequate to the purpose of their construction and removal. Those, however, who could engrave precious stones so early, as in a future section, it will be shewn the Egyptians could, and who in that respect were the masters of the Hebrews ; those who, by whatever means, to us at present inscrutable, could cut the hieroglyphic figures so deeply and indelibly in the hardest granite ; could surely find instruments to carve from the quarry the massy tablet and the majestic column.

It should also be remembered, that through the centre of both these celebrated empires of Egypt and Babylon, rolled two mighty rivers ; the Euphrates, whose sources are by geographers placed amid the lofty mountains of Armenia, abounding with marble quarries ; and the Nile, whose course about Elephantine, in Upper Egypt, was obstructed by innumerable rocks of the finest granite, that supplied materials for building the temples of Egypt. These rivers favoured the speedy conveyance of any masses which the artists of those countries had either power or skill to remove. What they wanted in mechanical skill (in which, however, they can by no means be considered as wholly deficient) was compen-

sated for by the arduous, the incessant, toil of numbers, servilely obedient to the will of a despotic sovereign, who could command *life* as well as *labour*, and at the same time devoted to the superstition cherished in those temples, whose massy columns their united efforts were rearing. This fact is fully confirmed by Herodotus, where he informs us, that two thousand of the most skilful workmen that could be procured were employed for three whole years in the fabrication and conveyance down the Nile of that prodigious sacellum of stone, to which Egypt could boast of nothing equal in one mass. The dimensions of this famous chapel, externally, were as follows. It was 21 cubits in length, 14 cubits wide, and 8 cubits high: internally, it was 18 cubits and 20 digits in length, 12 cubits wide, and 5 cubits high. The same Herodotus also acquaints us, that the great pyramid was 20 years in building, and that 100,000 men were constantly at work upon it during that period; these 100,000 men employed upon it being exchanged every three months for 100,000 fresh artificers: thus in the space of a year, no less than 400,000 workmen were employed upon that fabric only*. With a population that could afford such immense supplies of robust and powerful men, what project in either country, practicable by human labour and industry, could have failed? especially with the aid, as before observed, of those celebrated rivers,

* Herodotus, lib. ii. cap. 124, ubi supra.

the Euphrates and the Nile. Immense multitudes, summoned by religion and the royal mandate from all the provinces of those empires, could easily effect what, without any knowledge of metallurgy, was afterwards accomplished in Peru and Mexico.

The great and inexhaustible storehouse of marble of various kinds and colours, of which the statues, the columns, and other ornamental parts of the temples of Egypt were composed, is to be found in those two vast ridges of mountains, which bound Egypt on its eastern and western limits, and run for many hundred miles parallel with the Nile. On the sloping sides of these mountains, quarries have been found deeply excavated ; and still are to be seen at about the altitude to which the Nile rises at its highest elevation, columns half cut and rounded off, as if ready to be detached from their rocky bed, for the purpose of being conveyed down its stream to the lower Egypt ; and, according to Pliny's statement, it was effected in this manner. A canal, being cut from the river to the place where the obelisk lay, was made to pass directly under the column. After having ascertained its weight, they constructed two floats, according to that weight, but whose surface greatly exceeded the height of the banks of the canal, and then loaded them heavily with stones, a foot square, double the weight of the obelisk itself, that they might sink considerably in the water. Thus loaded, and deeply sunk in the stream, they were brought under the body of the column, when the stones being gradually removed, the lightened rafts lifted up

the obelisk above the edge of the canal, and it was thence carefully conducted down the stream as near to its destined station as the river would allow *.

This attachment of the Egyptians to colossal and rocky structures of every kind, for both their temples and their palaces bore a striking resemblance to caverns, not only in the massy thickness of their walls, but in the gloomy arrangement of the surrounding adyta and columns, tends very much to strengthen the supposition of their having originally been a nation of Troglodytes ; inhabitants, first of the Æthiopian heights, and then of the grottos of the Thebais ; their safe and elevated abode, after escaping a great calamity. The addiction to gloomy and melancholy rites of all the Cuthite tribes has, indeed, been repeatedly remarked by writers both ancient and modern. But none were more profoundly melancholy than the race of Misraim, and it is highly probable that the profound gloom of the caverns of the Thebais, their ancient habitations, had indelibly impressed their minds with that sombre tint, and given to their theology and philosophy that veil of mysterious obscurity, which Plato and Pythagoras, on their visit to Egypt, found them to possess, and which, afterwards, those philosophers imitated on their return to their respective countries and schools. Their taste for hieroglyphic symbols, so connected with sacred mys-

* Pliny, lib. xxxvi. sect. 14.

ticism, was probably derived from the same source: the whole of Egypt was, in fact, ONE VAST *ÆNIGMA*, and in the aforesaid caverns were, doubtless, celebrated the most ancient mysteries of the world. Those mysteries, as must be evident to every person who attentively considers the symbols used in their celebration, and engraved upon so many monuments that have survived the wreck of time, unquestionably alluded to the escape of their ancestors from a mighty deluge that destroyed all existing creatures except one favoured family, preserved in a sacred *baris*, that predominant and incessantly recurring emblem in all those mysteries. With these they had blended other mysterious rites, the offspring of their wild mythological speculations; particularly those of the great Egyptian God Pan, which were, also, of a gloomy and terrific nature, (as the word *panic* implies,) but into the details of which there is no occasion for us to enter in this place.

But farther, the immense number of these obelisks dispersed throughout Egypt is so astonishing, that it is natural to impute the erection both of them, the temples, and the pyramids themselves, to the operations in a great degree of some other cause than mere superstition, and Pliny has unfolded to us that motive. He imputes it to that profound and sagacious policy which laboured to keep a turbulent and overflowing population constantly employed. Nor can we allow their subterraneous works to have been less stupendous than their superficial ones, when we consider the extent and magnificence of the grottos of the Thebais, the

tombs of the kings, and other vast excavations. These have hitherto been but imperfectly explored ; but from what have been visited by ancient and modern travellers, some judgement may be formed of the vast extent of the whole. It is not improbable that they extended under the pyramids, possibly under the Nile itself, and that all Thebes was built upon these subterranean caverns*. The hollow sound that issued from the vast Memnonian statue, when struck, which it probably was at the rising of the sun by the concealed priest, doubtless proceeded from the excavation of the rock beneath. In those awful recesses, then, we may conclude, that not only the sublime arcana of their religion were taught, but the most important matters of government were discussed by a race of kings who, it will be remembered, were all initiated into the solemnities of the priesthood.

Besides the regular obelisks, and the inscriptions on their four faces, the Egyptians had other stone tablets, presenting only two faces resembling those on which the Decalogue was engraved, and called **HERMAIC** pillars, or pillars of Hermes, afterwards so much in use among the Greeks, and on these seem to have been inscribed their profoundest doctrines both in philosophy and natural history, as well as those most ancient records of the country to which none but the priests had access. These arcana of science, especially of

* Plinii Hist. Nat. lib. xxxvi. cap. 14.

astronomical science, were said to have been copied by the first Hermes (for in antiquity there were generally two personifications of any celebrated character, resembling the *avatars* of India) from the pillars of Seth, and from them by the second Hermes called Trismegistus, the supposed inventor of letters, translated and formed into books, amounting in number to many thousands, but afterwards reduced to forty two; for that is the number of the sacred Hermetic books which, according to Clemens*, were borne in the procession of Isis. Their principal contents are also enumerated by that author; and if the representation be true, to be *learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians*, which is declared of Moses in scripture, must have been no mean acquisition.

Now although such just objections have been repeatedly urged in preceding pages, against these famed pillars, in the land of Seriad, supposed to have been of ante-diluvian construction, and inscribed with the history of the arts and sciences of the ancient world, on account of the improbability of any such pillars resisting the overwhelming violence of that mighty deluge; yet that, from pillars of a later, of post-diluvian origin, thus inscribed, and deposited in the inner recesses of the Egyptian temples, as was the custom of the Egyptians, Manetho, the priest of Heliopolis, might have copied his account of the Egyptian dynasties, which he dedicated to

* Clemens Alexand. Stromata, lib vi. p. 364.

his patron, Ptolemy Philadelphus, is a supposition by no means improbable. This was the earliest mode in Egypt of preserving sacred and historical records, as it was in Babylon, where they had no marble like the Thebais, to engrave them on *bricks*, and from these pillars or *STELÆ*, as they were denominated, in after ages they were copied into books formed either of the prepared skins of beasts, or from the plant *papyrus*, some specimens of which have reached posterity.

Iamblichus* informs us, that it was from the inscriptions on these Hermaical pillars, that Pythagoras and Plato, when resident in Egypt, learned the principles of their philosophy. Abenethi, an Arabian writer (apud Kircher, *Obelisc. Pamphil.* p. 45,) says; “*Hermes primus fuit, qui erexit columnas illas, quas acus Pharaonis dicunt; et in iis insculpsit quas invenerat scientias.*” The authenticity of the matters contained in those books is not the subject of our present discussion; but it is difficult to imagine that Manetho would have insulted the sovereign of Egypt by asserting a series of palpable falsehoods, and those so easily demonstrated. The fact probably is that, like all other ancient histories, they contained many absurd fables, mixed with a considerable portion of historical truth. All that now remains of Manetho’s history is preserved for us in the *Chronographia* of Syncellus, or, to speak more properly, of one George, a monk who flourished in the eighth

* Iamblichus de Mysteriis, sect. *i.* cap. 2.

century at Constantinople, and who was thus denominated from the office of Syncellus, or bishop's suffragan, which he filled in that church. It is remarkable, that under the auspices of the same learned prince the venerable Mosaic records were also translated into Greek, and that, about the same period, i. e. the middle of the third century before Christ, and in the same prince's reign, the Chaldaean history of Berosus was composed. I have thought it proper to mention these circumstances, as the knowledge of this singular coincidence of facts concerning authors so much noticed in this work, may be gratifying to the less learned reader of these strictures. In general, they powerfully corroborate, instead of undermining, the truth of the Mosaic writings.

For this wide excursive range among the stupendous monuments of Egyptian grandeur, when the proper subject was BABYLON, I have this forcible, and I hope not inadequate, apology to make. From the perishable nature of the materials of which Babylon was constructed, no remains of magnificence prodigious as those of Egypt are there to be found. Formed only of brick and bitumen, and in the course of so many ages assailed by scorching suns and impetuous rains, the upper parts of those structures have gradually mouldered away: the most perfect remains are found near the surface of and under the earth, preserved by the humidity of the soil. Thence the finest specimens of the bricks are obtained by excavation; and the walls of furnace-baked bricks that form the foundations, we have been informed by Mr. Rich, are of the astonishing

thickness of 60 feet*. **E X U N O D I S C E O M N E S.** The scale of operations was equally gigantic ; but, from the Egyptians employing granite instead of brick, the works of that people have continued in a state almost approaching to primeval grandeur, while those of the Assyrians have perished. The Egyptians, however, being equally the descendants of Cush, and cultivating *religious rites* in many respects nearly similar, especially in respect to that solar superstition, the object of our extended discussion, we must have recourse to the latter for the developement of their views in raising those massy structures, and the meaning of the mythological symbols. As far as we have hitherto examined them, they seem for the most part to be of astronomical origin, and to have reference to the solar orb, the planets, and constellations personified.

We shall for the present take our leave of the Egyptians ; but in regard to that singular people, there is one subject as yet untouched upon, in these pages, of so astonishing a nature, and which, apparently, is so utterly degrading to the wisdom of that enlightened nation, the vaunted instructors of the human race in science and morals—I mean, their general addiction to the **WORSHIP OF BEASTS**, called **SACRED**, that I hope I shall be pardoned for, hereafter, devoting a few additional pages of this appendix to the considera-

* Rich's Memoir, p. 22.

tion of it. It will open to us an awful scene for reflection, and demonstrate how puerile are the highest exertions of human reason, how baseless every fabric of theological speculation, without the aid of divine revelation.

To resume the discussion concerning the Babylonian obelisk; by whatever means brought thither, there can be no reasonable ground for doubt, from the account of Diodorus and Mr. Wilford, that such a column did actually exist in old Babylon, and may now, as Mr. Rich intimates, lie buried amidst its ruins. It probably was placed in the centre of the principal square of that vast city, for the purpose presently to be unfolded, as well as to be the admiration of both natives and foreigners. In farther corroboration of its existence there, when Babylon flourished in some degree of its ancient glory, it may be noticed that Democritus, the philosopher, is said by his biographer Laertius*, to have transcribed his moral discourses from a *Babylonian pillar*. He is even said by Clemens to have written an express treatise on the *sacred letters of Babylon*; a proof that they actually had such sacred letters; and he, having been educated, as we learn from the same Laertius, among the Chaldæan Magi, was best able to explain them. What a calamity to eastern literature is the loss of that treatise, especially as, Democritus having flourished in the

* Laertius in Vitâ Democriti, p. 53, edit. Casaubon, 1615.

4th century before Christ, their latent meaning might then have been penetrated. It will be remembered, also, that, according to Herodotus, Darius Hystaspes ordered to be engraved, in Greek and Assyrian characters, on two columns, the names of all the nations which he commanded*.

The antient monument from which Democritus copied the inscriptions, being expressly described as a *Babylonian pillar*, this circumstance will account for the mode of writing on the Babylonian bricks, which is perpendicular and not horizontal, that method being most conformable to its construction, and resembling in this respect many of the inscriptions on the Egyptian obelisks. They are therefore to be read, as they were written, from the top to the bottom, as the most convenient arrangement, and, that no mistake may arise in this respect, and that the words of one column might not be confounded with those of another, the reader will perceive, at least upon the Museum brick, engraved in this volume, that those columns are separated by parallel lines. The same arrangement takes place on the Persepolitan gems, engraved in Raspe, where the heads of the nails are, as on these bricks, always uppermost.

The particular purposes above enumerated were, however, far from being the only uses to which obelisks were applied in Babylon

* Herodotus, lib. iv. sect. 87.

and Egypt. By the astronomical race of those countries, they were often used as **Gnomons**, by their means to mark the length of the meridian shadow, as well as for many other purposes connected with a science to which they were so intensely devoted from the earliest times on record. Nor ought the height of this vast pillar to be any objection, since we know that, at a far later period, viz. in A. D. 1437, the great astronomer, Ulug Beg, so often referred to in the preceding pages, made use of an astronomical Gnomon, which was one hundred and eighty Roman feet in height, while that erected by Ignatio Dante at Bologna, in A. D. 1576, was sixty-seven feet high. The former of these statements offers to our consideration so remarkable a fact, that, to render it credible to the reader, I must beg his permission to enlarge a little upon it. The fact itself is related by that great mathematician, Mr. Greaves, when speaking of the astronomical tables of that eastern prince, so celebrated over all the oriental world. On the occasion of constructing those tables, he summoned to his capital the most learned men in all Asia, and erected in the midst of it a noble Observatory, and, among a number of curious and uncommon instruments, a Gnomon of such dimensions as are hardly conceivable; for, he adds, that, when he was at Constantinople, he was assured by some Turkish astronomers of eminence and credibility, *Ulug Begum præter alia instrumenta exactissima, quæ paraverat, Quadrantem stupendæ molis construxisse, cuius radius altitudinem summæ fornicis templi Sanctæ*

Sophiæ adequaret; i. e. that Ulug Beg, besides other most exact instruments, had constructed a quadrant of such a stupendous magnitude, that its **RADIUS**, in length, equalled the height of the dome of St. Sophia*. Whatever exaggeration there might have been in this report, Mr. Greaves observes, that very large instruments were absolutely necessary to take the height of the pole, with such accuracy as he had done at Samarcand; for he makes it $39^{\circ} 37' 23''$, whence we may infer his great precision in the rest of his observations.

Whether, however, the obeliscal columns of Egypt were, or were not applied to this use by the founders of them in that country, we know for certain, from Pliny, that one of those two remarkable monuments of this designation, which were transported thence to Rome by Augustus, was set up by him in the Campus Martius, for the express purpose of being used *as a Gnomon*. The words of Pliny are as follows: *Ei qui est in Campo Martio divus Augustus addidit mirabilem usum ad deprehendendas solis umbras, dierumque ac noctium magnitudines, strato lapide ad obelisci magnitudinem, cui par fieret umbra brumæ confectæ die sexta hora, paulatimque per regulas, quæ sunt ex ære inclusæ, singulis diebus decresceret, ac rursus augesceret†*". Sir Martin Folkes, in the Transactions of the Royal Society, has explained this description

* See Greaves's Works, vol. ii. p. 181. † Nat. Hist. lib. xxxvi. cap. 10.

of Pliny in the following manner. He thinks, “that there was laid down from the foot of the obelisk northward a level pavement of stone, equal in breadth to the breadth of the obelisk itself; and equal in length to its shadow at noon upon the shortest day; that is to say, that its length was to the height of the obelisk, almost as twenty-two are to ten; and that into this pavement there were properly let in parallel rulers of brass, whose distances from the point directly under the apex of the obelisk were respectively equal to the lengths of the shadow thereof at noon on the several days of the year; as the same lengths decreased from the shortest day to the longest, and again increased from the longest to the shortest*.” This gnomonic column, Kircher asserts, in his time lay buried in the Campus Martius: the other column somewhat inferior in elevation lay also, for many centuries, immersed among the rubbish in the great circus, till, in the pontificate of Sixtus the Fifth, about A. D. 1589, it was raised from its bed of ruins, and erected near the Vatican in the manner before related.

Whether the preceding conjectures in respect to this disputed obelisk are founded, or not, we ought still to bear in remembrance the important fact, recorded by Herodotus, who flourished 440 years ante Christum, and before alluded to, viz. that the Greeks learned (not of the Egyptians) but of the Babylonians, *the use*

* Philosoph. Transact. vol. xliv. part 2, p. 369.

*of the pole, the GNOMON, and the division of the day into twelve parts**. With a few additional notices in support of that fact, I shall conclude this head of extended observations.

In the former portion of this work, we took occasion to mention, in proof of the early devotion of the Chaldæans to astronomy, the circumstance of the king of Babylon having sent an embassy to Jerusalem, to investigate the particulars concerning the shadow of the sun, their tutelary God, having *gone back ten degrees on the dial of Ahaz*, a report of which had reached that city, and excited the utmost astonishment, and probably dismay, among those diligent observers of the phænomena of the heavens. With the discussion of any difficulties apparently attending the miracle itself, we have at present no concern; our attention must be confined to another important circumstance in this investigation. The historical fact recorded in scripture supposes, at least, a previous familiar acquaintance with the instrument, and of the principles on which it was formed, and for that knowledge also, as well as for the instrument itself, the Hebrews had, in all probability, been indebted to the Assyrians. We noticed, also, the very early period of that event, which occurred 720 years before Christ, and is nearly 300 years before the use of the sun-dial, according to their own historians, was known in Greece, into which country it is said by Laertius,

* Herodot. lib. ii. sect. 109.

above cited, to have been first introduced by Anaximander, who had himself travelled in Chaldæa ; and who is also said, first among the Greeks, to have found out the *obliquity of the ecliptic*. Vitruvius, however, affirms, that the most ancient sun-dial was constructed at Athens by Berosus, the Chaldæan priest of Belus ; to whom also, Pliny tells us, a statue was erected in that city with a *golden tongue*, to mark both his eloquence and the truth of his astrological predictions. Berosus, cui ob divinas prædictiones Athenienses publice in Gymnasio statuam inaurata lingua statuere*. I may here mention, that a Greek sun-dial of a curious construction, having four faces, with a dial represented on each face, is to be seen among the antiquities, brought from Athens, in the British Museum. Though found at Athens, it is not supposed to be of very high antiquity ; the inscription imports it to have been the work of Phædrus, a native of Pæania ; the form of the Greek letters marks its fabrication to have been about the time of the emperor Severus.

The great Plato, educated in Egypt, confirms all that has been above asserted, by frankly acknowledging, in his treatise called *Epinomis*†, that the first rudiments of astronomy were taught the Greeks by **BARBARIANS**, who enjoyed the advantage of living in a warmer country and under clearer skies : such as, in fact, are those

* Pliny, lib. vii. cap. 37.

† Platonis Opera, vol. ii. p. 401, edit. 1578.

of Assyria and Egypt, whose inhabitants were ever so denominated by that arrogant race. Having mentioned Athens and its learning so particularly in the last paragraph, I shall just state, in addition to the well-known fact of the Athenians being a colony that emigrated under Cecrops, their first king, from Sais in Egypt, where was the most superb temple of Isis—that is, the Minerva of Egypt, with the peplum, or veil, exactly as she was habited at Athens—that her very name decidedly speaks her origin. She was denominated by the Egyptians, **NEITH** or **NETHA**, the divine wisdom personified, and her Greek name of **Aθηνα** (Athena) seems to be only the same name written backward in the Boustrophedon method, with the final **η** adjoined. This will, in a great degree, account for almost the whole of the mythology of Greece having been borrowed from Egypt ; and the reader will not be surprised therefore to find, that in the mind of the founder of Athens the same astronomical ideas prevailed, as in that of the founders of most of the great cities of Asia and Africa, especially of her who built Babylon, and surrounded it with walls, in extent 360 furlongs, to equal the number of days of the *ancient year* ; for Suidas informs us, that the city was divided “into *four tribes*, representing the four seasons of the year ; which tribes contained *twelve wards*, corresponding to the *twelve months* ; and each ward had *thirty families*, answering to the thirty days of each month, in all 360, the number of the existing year*.”

* See Suidas Lexicon in voce *γεωνται*.

One remarkable event will never be forgotten in the records of astronomy, viz. that, by a Gnomon, Pythias, about 300 years before Christ, at Marseilles, observed the sun's altitude, and found the height of the Gnomon was to the meridian shadow at the summer solstice, as $213\frac{1}{2}$ to 600, just the height which Gassendus found it to be at the same place in the year 1636, almost 2000 years after : so exact were some of the ancient observations. In conformity, too, with what has been formerly urged, in respect to the ancient connection between the Asiatics and Americans, it may here be added that the Spaniards, at the conquest of Peru, according to Acosta, found PILLARS of curious and costly workmanship erected in several places, by the meridian shadows of which their philosophers had, in a long course of years, and by reiterated observations, determined the time of the EQUINOXES, at which period they annually celebrated a feast to the sun, of the utmost pomp and splendor.

Merodac Baladan, the Babylonian sovereign, who sent to inquire respecting the miracle of the dial at Jerusalem, dispatched his embassy thither, according to Usher*, in the 27th year of the great æra of Nabonasar, when astronomy flourished in its meridian glory in that metropolis ; indeed, some respectable authors, rejecting the generally-received chronology, conjecture Baladan and Nabonasar to be the same person ; a conjecture, considering all the

* Usher's Annals, p. 88.

circumstances of the case, by no means wholly improbable. The precise period, however, when Nabonasar began to reign in Babylon is of the highest importance to be known ; since Ptolemy, and all succeeding astronomers, calculate their years from the commencement of that æra, which is generally fixed for the 747th year before Christ, and the 3967th of the Julian period. Among all the eastern nations, therefore, none were more likely to have originally invented, and afterwards taught to the adjoining nations, the use of the Gnomon than the Assyrians, upon which simple instrument the Greeks wonderfully improved, and at length soared to heights in astronomical science that left their daring masters far behind them.

ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS RESPECTING THE DAGON OF CHALDEA; ITS MARKED RESEMBLANCE TO THE MATSYA, OR FISH AVATAR, OF INDIA; AND THE POWERFUL CORROBORATIVE EVIDENCE AFFORDED BY THE THREE FIRST INDIAN AVATARS TO THE SCRIPTURAL HISTORY OF THE DELUGE.

There cannot be a greater proof exhibited of the striking similarity, existing between the religions of those two ancient nations, which have engrossed so much of our attention in the former portion of this work, the Chaldaean and the Indians, than the marked resemblance, in all the material points of character, between the great deity of the former, called DAGON, and the MATSYA, or first Indian avatar. That similarity, indeed, is so strong as nearly to demonstrate the identity of the two systems, without the forcible collateral aid brought by Sir W. Jones in respect to their language : for, similarity of language and religious institutions are, doubtless, the grand criteria that mark the near affinity of ancient nations ; and that affinity in these respects between the old Iranians and Indians has in many prominent particulars been already exemplified. Another striking proof of that ancient connection will be found in the frequent pilgrimages formerly made by the Saniassis, or religious penitents, to the banks of the Euphrates, and, in particular, to the Juala-Muchi, or flaming springs of Naptha near Baku. Mr. Wilford acquaints us, that he has even conversed with some devotees,

who had recently visited that of Corcoor, situated to the eastward of Tigris, and still called *Juala-Muchi*, or the flaming mouth*. The Chaldaean name of Dagon is derived from the Hebrew word DAG, a fish; in Greek, he is denominated οδαχων. His more common name is OANNES. It is the same idol with the Phœnician Derceto or Atergatis, which circumstance affords another proof of the general agreement, as to theological points, of the primæval records of the people of Asia.

In the time of Alorus, there came out of the Red Sea, and appeared near Babylonia, an *intelligent* animal (for that is implied by the sense, though the Greek original of Syncellus has ζων ἀφενον, an *irrational* animal, the text being probably corrupted) called Oannes, which had the entire body of a fish; but beneath the fish's head it had another head, which was human; and also the feet of a human being, which came out of the fish's tail. It had also a human voice: and the exact image was preserved in the time of Berossus†. This description proves it to have been a real man, clothed with the skin of a fish; and every circumstance in the narration points out its direct allusion to the patriarch who had been so long a tenant of the watery element. This animal is said to have instructed the Chaldaeans in the knowledge of the arts and sciences; particularly in architecture, geometry, and jurisprudence. He

* Asiatic Researches, vol. iv. p. 379.

† Syncelli Chronograph. p. 39.

taught them also how to gather and preserve seeds and fruits, and in short by his precepts he reformed and civilized an ignorant and savage race. Corroborative of this description, the Indian fish avatar appears on the plate annexed as just risen from the waves, with the sacred **VEDAS** in his hands, those books containing the sciences and literature of the Hindoos, which he has just recovered from the waters of the ocean, in which the earth, under the tyranny of the evil daemon Hayagreva, lay still submerged. The second avatar is only a variety, or rather a continuation, of the same history : for in that avatar the earth is represented as rescued by Vishnu from the power of the aforesaid evil daemon, by his assuming the form of a *boar*, who, plunging into the abyss, on his enormous tusks brings up the earth, which, in the third or Courma avatar, is firmly fixed on the back of a *tortoise*; the Hindoo symbol of strength. The romantic story in that avatar respecting the churning of the ocean by the Soors and Assoors, to make the sea disgorge the sacred things which it had swallowed up in the preceding great deluge, in Sir W. Jones's judgement, involves in it a considerable portion of astronomical information, and in that light I have endeavoured to explain its meaning.

All these are so many decided attestations to the everlasting verity of the Mosaic records, for I must again repeat, in regard to these extravagant fictions, these wild mythological details of the Hindoos, that, however mysterious the allegory, and however wild and romantic the language in which it is clothed, this

fact may be depended upon, that there in general lies concealed, at the bottom, some important historical fact or some profound theological dogma. Divested of its inflated diction and fabulous incidents, the invention of an oriental fancy, what can the general and stupendous convulsion of nature, given in such dreadful detail in the last mentioned avatar ;—the mountain buried in the tempestuous bosom of the ocean ; the ocean, roaring and raging amidst the conflict of contending elements ; the torrents of descending rain poured down by Eendra, the Hindoo god of the firmament ; the total annihilation of every living thing on the mountain, and of all the inhabitants of *the great abyss* which is below the earth (an expression very similar to the Scripture phrase of *all the fountains of the great deep*) ;—what can all this accumulation of magnificent and dreadful images shadow out, except the desolation of the earth during the period of the universal deluge, when the Soors and Assoors, who may be considered as the ethereal ministers of the divine vengeance, were commissioned to harass the agitated globe ? What can the incarnation of Veeshnu, the preserving power of India, in the form of a vast tortoise, to support the ponderous mass on the strand of the ocean, portend, but the benevolent intervention of Providence, personified by the incarnation of Veeshnu, to save from total destruction a perishing world ? The ideas may to us appear puerile, and the images referred to, ludicrous ; but let us remember, they are the speculations of a race who delight in allegory, and ransack all nature for objects by which to illustrate their

meaning. The fact here undoubtedly alluded to, is the most momentous of all events recorded in history ; a fact the evidence of which is deeply stamped on the face of nature, the general deluge, and the preservation, by intervening Providence, of one virtuous family for the renovation of the species.

Independently, however, of historical or moral allusion, it has been before observed that with this avatar a good deal of astronomy is connected, as without doubt it was in an avatar, where all nature is represented as convulsed to the centre, and the orbs, which are always introduced by the astronomical priests of India, to bring about any catastrophe, are made to shed their darkest and most malignant influence. The mountain Mandara, with which the deep was churned, is the *north pole*, and the serpent Asookee, whose enormous body enfolded the globe, while the ocean was churned, is no other than the celestial serpent, or draco, of the sphere. The *Testudo*, or Tortoise itself, it will be recollectcd, is a very old constellation, situated near the north pole, round which it slowly revolves. The pre-eminent splendour and beauty of the *Lucida Lyrae* might well induce the ancient Indians to consider it as the peculiar and favoured abode of an avatar, as its beneficent light, beaming from the arctic circle, and therefore so favourable to navigators, rendered it peculiarly proper to be introduced in that portion of a system of physical mythology, intended to record so awful an event as a general deluge of the globe. The agitation of the waters by the mountain Mandara being, doubtless, intended

to represent the general convulsion of nature, and the labouring of the poles of the world, it seemed proper to a race of astronomical mythologists, that a constellation should be introduced into the awful drama, and certainly no one constellation in the arctic region more merited this distinction than that under consideration. Veeshnu, therefore, entering into this benign asterism, supported the sinking pole, convulsed by the assault of enraged dæmons ; the rapid whirling of the mountain, allegory apart, means no more than the impetuous revolution of the earth on its axis; and the testudo being near that axis, and formerly, it is certain, still nearer to it, the earth is poetically said to be placed upon it, and to turn round it*.

While we are upon this subject, let me not forget to remark, that whosoever will attentively cast his eye upon the figure of the Indian Vara or boar Avatar, as faithfully delineated on my plate, illustrative of that Avatar, in the ancient history of India, and compare it with that of the Canis Anubis, or more properly the Cynocephalus, or dog's head Numen, engraved or painted upon the ancient monuments of Egypt, must be struck with the great resemblance in the design of these symbolical animals, and be convinced that they, as well as most of the other emblematical designations above alluded to, owe their origin to some very ancient and

* See an ample and detailed description of this, and all the Indian Avatars, in my Ancient History of India, vol i. p. 500.

intimate connection between the historical records and mythological notions of the two nations. This idea is further corroborated by the striking circumstance, that, if Veeshnu had his *tortoise*, so had Hermes his *testudo*, out of which he is said to have framed the *lyra* of the sphere.

The fourth Avatar, or *the lion bursting from a marble column to devour a blaspheming monarch*, which, in the opinion of Sir W. Jones, has a decided allusion to the calamity at Babel, cannot be passed over without notice in a volume, in which the catastrophe of Babel engages so large a portion of discussion. Notwithstanding the objections, urged by writers not wholly sceptical, against this particular *avatar* having any relation to scripture history, for they consider it as entirely of an *astronomical* nature, yet the very peculiar circumstances in the narration itself, the bursting column, and the blasphemous defiance of the most high, together with the *early period* of their history in which it occurs, induce me to continue unalterably firm in the belief, that, however obscured by allegory, it actually has relation to the awful recorded event on the plain of Shinar. The name and history of BALI, also occurring in the next avatar, that insolent and magnificent tyrant whom every circumstance points out to be the Nimrod of scripture, and the Belus of profane writers, afford the most decided support to the preceding statements, connected especially as that history is with the subsequent detailed exploits of the three Ramas, all reducible to that one great Rama; the son of Cush, the founder of empires, the enacter of

the first laws, the cherisher of the infant sciences, and whose descendant, Rameses, erected to the sun the great obelisk at Heliopolis. In respect to the disputed fourth Avatar, in vindication of myself, I must beg permission to remark, that it is evident, from Sir W. Jones's ninth anniversary discourse, that it was his intention to enter more particularly into the details of that Avatar; for he there says, "it will be proved, I trust, on some *future occasion*, that the lion bursting from a pillar to destroy a blaspheming giant, and the dwarf who beguiled and held in derision the magnificent Bali, are one and the same story related in a symbolical style*." His premature death, shortly afterwards, doubtless prevented the completion of this as well as of many other important meditated essays. For the detailed history of the other Avatars, particularly the wonderful history of their great incarnate deity, C_RI_SH_NA, whose life and miracles have been so infamously paralleled by French sceptics with those of the Christian Redeemer, I must refer the reader to the work above alluded to, and to a subsequent work, written expressly to prove those miracles a palpable forgery, by means of the spurious gospels, from our own sacred books†.

During this investigation into the character of the primordial deities of Asia, compounded of man and fish, it ought to be recol-

* Asiatic Researches, vol. iii. p. 486.

† See Ancient Ind. Hist. vol. i. *passim*; and "Brahminical Fraud Detected," in a series of letters to the bishops, published in 1812, and to be had only of the author.

lected that the great Syrian divinity, the Venus of the Greeks, had also her origin *from the sea*. The goddess Derceto, worshipped so particularly at Ascalon in that country, was represented with the head and face of a woman, while the rest of the body was of fish. Adjoining to her temple there was a large and deep lake abounding with fishes, sacred to that divinity, and on that account the Syrian nation wholly abstained from eating fish. Fishes of gold and silver were also consecrated to her in the sanctuary of that temple.

If the Chaldæans, however, and the Syrians, had their *fish deities*, the sons of Mizraim had also theirs, though not in such great variety as their Asiatic neighbours. Their abhorrence of the sea in general, and all that belonged to it, in the early periods of their history, prevented that kind of worship from being predominant among them, though to many species, the produce of their beloved Nile, for excellent qualities of various kinds, it will be seen hereafter that they paid a superstitious reverence. One remarkable instance, however, of corresponding superstition, should not be omitted to be noticed. On the Egyptian zodiac preserved for us in Kircher's *Œdipus Ægyptiacus*, in that particular sign which we denominate *pisces*, there is a figure placed, different indeed in point of sex, but in other respects exactly resembling the Matsya and Dagon images; human from the waist upwards, with the extremities of a fish. Now, it is well known, that the twelve great gods of antiquity were those of their zodiac; consequently this was one of their original divinities; and it is probably Isis, who, in

the war carried on by Typhon against the gods, together with her son Horus, concealed themselves under the form of a fish, and fled into Syria to avoid the rage of that enemy of Osiris. This at least is the origin of that sign, as given us by Hyginus, in his very curious work on the poetical heaven*. Serpents, too, they worshipped in very great abundance, and of every species. The basilisk, or aspic, was in particular a known symbol of royalty in that country, and constantly occurs in that view, twisted around the tiara of its sovereigns. We are informed indeed by Plutarch, that the people of Oxyryncus held in such high veneration a fish of the same name, that they made furious war upon the inhabitants of Cynopolis, where the Dog, their latrator Anubis, was universally worshipped; a war not to be terminated but by the powerful interference of the Romans, then masters of the country†. Here, too, another glaring proof of the congenial superstitions of Egypt and Athens may be adduced in the fact, that, as a serpent was worshipped in nearly all the temples of Egypt, so a serpent was the guardian genius of the Acropolis of Athens; while a vigilant dragon guarded the entrance of the temple of Ceres at Eleusis. Even Cecrops himself is sometimes mythologically represented as a compound being, *half-man and half-serpent*.

* See Hygini Cœlum Poetic. Astronom. p. 405, 8vo. édit. 1681.

† Plutarch de Iside et Osiride, p. 380.

STRICTURES RELATING TO THE GREAT GOLDEN IMAGE SET
UP AT BABYLON, BY NEBUCHADNEZZAR, AND THE IM-
MENSE TREASURES, IN GOLDEN ORNAMENTS AND VASES,
ASSERTED TO HAVE BEEN ANCIENTLY CONTAINED IN THE
TEMPLE OF BELUS.

The golden image and vases, recorded by Diodorus Siculus to have been treasured up in this vast temple, are, both in number and in value, so enormous, that, did not our own scriptures announce to us the existence there, at one period, of a golden image infinitely exceeding them all in value, we should esteem the whole as a gross fabrication of imposing priests and credulous historians. The possibility, however, of such vast treasures having been accumulated there being allowed on the authority alluded to, we are no longer justified in withholding our belief of the fact, from its apparent incredibility ; and I shall therefore proceed with the more confidence to investigate the account of those treasures and explore the sources whence this vast aggregate of wealth might have flowed into Babylon. That these golden symbols of such variety and value, were all deposited there by Semiramis, the founder of that city, it would be absurd to assert ; that some were, is credible from the corresponding testimonies of her magnificence ; and that the remainder were the addition of future monarchs and more extended

conquests in after ages may, without violating probability, be safely allowed.

We are impressed with the less astonishment at the extraordinary abundance in which gold, and the other precious metals, were diffused over the oriental world, when we consider with what ease, as we are informed both by tradition and history, they were obtained in those early ages to what they are in the present day, when they must be dug out of the deep and dark mine often times many hundred feet below the surface of the earth. In that infant state of mankind, and while yet avarice had not drenched with blood the finest regions of Asia, gold was found in many countries, and in considerable abundance near the surface, in a very pure state, on the sides of mountains and in the cavities of valleys. The stroke of thunder that rent the summit of the former laid bare the latent vein of concealed ore, while the lightning that fired the forest, and threw it into fusion, taught them the art of melting the shining mass, and in that fluid state of moulding it to any form their fancy might suggest. Gold was also brought down by torrents descending impetuously from the mountains, and by some of the great rivers of Asia abounding with golden sands. In this manner, particularly, was India supplied with the tributary gold which in after ages it so largely paid to Darius Hystaspes. India possesses within itself no mines of gold, though abundance of diamonds; the ore was brought down from the mountains of Thibet by the great river Indus; and the Ayeen Akbaree confirms the fact of several of the

streams that form the head of that river yielding gold dust*. The process of refining the gold thus easily obtained was far more tedious and difficult ; and though we are ignorant of the precise means by which the ancients attained to that knowledge, they doubtless enjoyed it at a very early period ; for, in the ancient book of Job, it is mentioned that God had *tried him as gold* in the fire of the refiner, Job 23.

Gold is said anciently to have so profusely abounded in Arabia, the country adjoining to Assyria, and supposed to have been the HAVILAND, or gold country of scripture, that the inhabitants, according to Strabo†, were accustomed to give double its weight for (to them) the more important and necessary one of iron. The southern region of that country is said to have had mines of the former metal in its purest state, and the gold to have been dug out of the earth in pieces of considerable magnitude. If such mines were ever in being, they have long ceased to exist ; and it is probable that the richest mine, whence both that country and Assyria derived its wealth in after periods, was the commerce carried on by means of the Phœnicians with the opposite coast of Africa, and more particularly with Sofala, where that ore was then, and is now, to be had in luxuriant abundance.

The same remark may be applied to Egypt, the produce of

* Ayeen Akbery, vol. ii. p. 175, under Sircar Cabul.

† Strabo, lib. xvi. p. 583.

whose mines in the Thebais are stated to have been inscribed upon the walls of the temple or tomb of Osymandæs, of the amazing amount of 32 millions of minæ, or Greek pounds*. Those mines have also vanished like her emerald mines, so famed in ancient times. Their commerce, however, with Æthiopia, and the other nations of the internal regions of that vast continent for gold dust and ivory, flourished, immemorially, and continued even in the time of the Ptolemies to flourish with unimpaired vigour. There can be no doubt, also, that it was as immemorially employed in the horrid traffic of human blood; since Joseph was sold to the Midianitish merchants trading into Egypt, for *twenty pieces of silver*. This commerce continued to flourish without interruption, till the period at which Cambyses poured his desolating legions into Egypt. Under that scourge of the Persian dynasty, and his successors, commerce declined and science drooped; but both revived and flourished with renovated vigour under Ptolemy Philadelphus. The immense treasures in gold and silver, which Egypt then possessed, are proved beyond contradiction by the astonishing display of those innumerable vases, crowns, tripods, and other ornaments of gold, which decorated the grand phallic festival, celebrated there towards the close of that prince's long and triumphant reign.

* See Diod. Sic. lib. i. p. 50.

There is an account given in Diodorus Siculus* of the mode after which the Egyptians worked and washed the gross metal obtained from the mines in the Thebais ; for the lower Egypt was entirely destitute of mines. They commenced the operation by pounding the ore, and reducing it to grains of the size of millet. It was then reduced to powder under millstones of great weight. The gold-dust, thus finely ground, was spread over a floor of boards, somewhat inclined, and well washed with water, which ran off from the sloping declivity, bearing with it the grosser terrestrial particles that had adhered to it. This washing was several times repeated ; and the ore, after having been well rubbed between the hands of the workmen, and thoroughly cleaned by sponges from all remaining filth, was consigned over to those whose business it was to smelt it.

It is curious, so many centuries after, to observe the same practice exactly continued, and in the same region. The late unfortunate Mungo Park, in the last journal he lived to write in the deserts of Africa, gives an account of this process of washing the ore, in the following passage. Having obtained the governor's permission to visit the pits, where the gold is found, he hired a woman to go with him, and agreed to give her a *bar of amber*, if she would shew him a *grain of gold*. The gold was imperceptibly mingled with the sand and gravel in those pits. “ The woman took about half a

* Diod. Sic. lib. ii. p. 184.

pound of gravel with one hand from the heap, which I suppose belonged to her; and having put it into a large calabash, threw a little water on it with a small calabash ; which two calabashes are all that are necessary for washing gold. The quantity of water was only sufficient to cover the sand about one inch. She then crumbled the sand to pieces, and mixed it with the water ; this she did not in a rotatory manner, but by pulling her hands towards herself. She then threw out all the large pebbles, looking on the ground where she threw them, for fear of throwing out a piece of gold. Having done this, she gave the sand and water a rotatory motion, so as to make a part of the sand and water fly over the brim of the calabash. While she did this with her *right* hand, with her *left* she threw out of the centre of the vortex a portion of sand and water at every revolution. She then put in a little fresh water, and as the quantity of sand was now much diminished, she held the calabash in an oblique direction, and made the sand move slowly round, while she constantly agitated it with a quick motion in another direction.

“I now observed a quantity of black matter, resembling gunpowder, which she told me was *gold rust*; and before she had moved the sand one quarter round the calabash, she pointed to a yellow speck, and said *sanoo affilli*, see the gold. On looking attentively I saw a portion of pure gold, and took it out. It would have weighed about *one grain*. The whole of the washing, from the first putting in of the sand till she shewed me the gold, did not exceed the space of *two minutes*. I now desired her to take a larger portion.

She put in, as nearly as I could guess, about two pounds ; and having washed it in the same manner, and nearly in the same time, found no fewer than *twenty-three* particles ; some of them were very small. In both cases I observed that the quantity of sanoo mira, or *gold rust*, was at least forty times greater than the quantity of gold. She assured me that they sometimes found pieces of gold as large as her fist. I could not ascertain the quantity of gold washed here in one year ; but I believe it must be considerable, though they wash only during the beginning and end of the rains.*”

The greatest mart for this metal on the African coast, was, as previously observed, the golden Sofala, which Mr. Bruce has incontestably proved to be the Ophir of Scriptures ; and it was probably from those mines that David and Solomon obtained those immense treasures, which animated the former to project, and enabled the latter to complete, the stately Temple of Jerusalem, with all the various golden ornaments used in its public worship. In one voyage only, the ships of Solomon are reported by Josephus to have brought home four hundred and fifty talents of gold ; by which the writer meant the talent used at Tyre, most probably current at Jerusalem, and thought by Arbuthnot to be of the same value as that of Attica, amounting to between three and four millions sterling. If these voyages to Ophir were frequently repeated,

* Park's Journal in Africa, in 1805, page 130.

there can be but little of hyperbole in that expression which occurs in scripture, of his making silver to be *at Jerusalem as the stones of the street*; because silver at that time bore a far inferior value to gold than it bears in these days; it being then in the proportion of sixteen to one; whereas, it is now only as twelve to one. On this ground, also, our astonishment will cease, when we read of David's having left in his treasury *a hundred thousand talents of gold, and a thousand thousand talents of silver*, 1 Chronicles xxii.

Although Assyria had no gold or silver mines of her own; yet, being the central region of that part of Asia in which commerce ever most vigorously flourished, she absorbed, as in a vast vortex, from the Indians, on one side, and the Phœnicians, on the other, no inconsiderable portion of the wealth of either of those great commercial nations. We are astonished, in the infancy of mankind, and in the dawn of science, to find works executed at once so costly and so stupendous. Those fabricated of the precious metals above alluded to, alone form the object of our present inquiry; and here, according to Diodorus Siculus, in the great temple of Belus, built by Semiramis, we find three prodigious statues, not of *cast*, for they are expressly said to have been of *beaten*, gold, representing Jupiter, the father of all, Juno the queen of heaven, and Rhea, the universal mother. Such were the names given by the Greek writers to deities, who, in respect to their appearance and their attributes, resembled those thus denominated in their mythology. The statue of Jupiter appeared erect, and in a walking attitude; it was forty feet in height,

and weighed a thousand Babylonian talents. The statue of Rhea also weighed the same number of talents, but was sculptured sitting on a throne of massy gold, with two *lions* standing before her as guardians of the statue, accompanied with two huge *serpents* in silver, that weighed each thirty talents. The statue of Juno was in an erect posture, and weighed eight hundred talents : her right hand grasped a *serpent* by the head, and her left a golden sceptre incrusted with gems. Before these three colossal figures stood an altar of beaten gold, forty feet in length, fifteen in breadth, and of the weight of five hundred talents. On this altar stood two vast flagons, weighing each thirty talents ; two censers for incense, probably kept continually burning, each weighing five hundred talents ; and, finally, three vessels for the consecrated wine, of which the largest, that assigned to Jupiter, weighed three hundred talents, and those to Juno and Rhea six hundred talents. Such is the relation given by Diodorus of the splendid decorations of this superb fane, and though borrowed from Ctesias, and probably exaggerated, may yet in the main be true. It certainly is in unison with the magnificent taste of the times, and might easily have been accomplished by the immense sums that flowed, in a golden inundation, into that capital from all the adjoining provinces subject to the crown of Assyria, in the zenith of its glory*.

Full credit may, also, be given to the testimonies which the re-

* Vide Diod. Sic. lib. ii. p. 98, edit. Rhodoman.

cords of all nations bear to the profusion of gold and gems displayed in the temples and palaces of Tyre. Of her astonishing wealth, and the rich species of manufactures in which she dealt, no more impressive evidence from profane authors need be adduced than the splendid donation sent by that magnificent people to the temple of the Tyrian Hercules at Gades, and mentioned in preceding pages ; the golden belt of Teucer, and the golden olive of Pygmalion, exquisitely wrought, bearing smaragdine fruit ; that is, berries of emerald, representing olives in the utmost perfection. This testimony of Apollonius, in Philostratus, who visited the temple of Gades, in the first century of the Christian æra, and that of Herodotus, concerning the dazzling ornaments of her own principal temple, seen by that historian many centuries before, the two lofty pillars of gold and emerald, which illuminated the whole dome by their reflected splendor, are fully confirmed by the decided voice of Scripture itself ; not only in respect to their elegant work in gold and ivory in the palaces of Solomon and the temple of Jerusalem, but more particularly and minutely in that animated description of the amazing wealth of commercial Tyre, in every article of Asiatic luxury ; the purple and fine linen ; the splendid embroidery and rich carpets ; the ivory, ebony, and boundless profusion of the precious metals, hoarded within her walls ; and the whole of which, it is important to be recollected, shortly after Ezekiel's prophecy, became the property of the all-powerful Nebuchadnezzar.

It is not alone, however, the immense quantity of gold

possessed by these nations, and particularly by the Egyptians in the early ages, to which we allude, but their elegant manufacture of it, which excites our astonishment. Not to mention what Diodorus relates concerning the stupendous *circle of wrought gold*, 365 cubits in circumference, that surrounded the tomb of the sovereign above alluded to, Osymandæs ; in a more authentic record, the Pentateuch of Moses, we read of the *golden chain* which Pharoah placed around the neck of Joseph, when he raised him to the dignity of cup-bearer ; of the *exceeding riches in gold and silver* carried by Abraham out of Egypt ; of the multitude of gold and silver vases, and other valuable trinkets, which the Israelites, though in a state of abject servitude, at their exodus, obtained of their wealthy neighbours ; and the bracelets, the ear-rings, and the clasps of gold, which they afterwards voluntarily offered to Moses for the fabrication of those sumptuous works, the golden crown, the table of shew-bread, and the rich chandelier of beaten gold devoted to the holiest rites of their religion. The idolatrous image, also, of the golden calf made by the Israelites in the Wilderness, after models which they must have seen in Egypt; and, more particularly, the arduous and scientific process, mentioned as afterwards performed by Moses, of rendering that gold potable by the offenders, are indisputable proofs of the high advance in chemical science both of themselves and of their masters. Concerning their great knowledge, however, in this respect, there can be no dispute, since, if Tubal Cain (the Vulcan of the pagans) was, as the scriptures

assert, *the instructor of every artificer in brass and iron*, the fusion of metals must have been known before the Flood.

Nor was the genius of the ancient Egyptians less expert in the art of engraving all kinds of precious stones, many of which, bearing the impressions of Sphinxes, Ibis's, and Scaribees, deeply cut in onyx, or jasper, have descended to posterity. From them too, the Hebrews learned to be so early skilful as they were in the lapidary's art, as is undeniably proved by the record of Moses, who calls upon the people for offerings of onyx and other stones, "to be set in the ephod of the high priest, and his breast plate," Exod. xxv. 7. These were to be engraved respectively with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. "With the work of an engraver in stone, like the engravings of a signet, shalt thou engrave them," Exod. xxviii. 15. It is hence evident that they must have early had among them artificers, skilled *to devise curious works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass; and in the cutting of stones to set them, and in carving of wood, to make any manner of cunning work.* The great variety, too, of these stones at that early period of the world, naturally strikes us with astonishment, as they prove that even then the bowels of the earth must have been deeply explored, and the science of mining extensively known. The following is the description of those twelve precious gems that decorated the Hebrew URIM and THUMMIM. "And thou shalt set in it settings of stones, even four rows of stones: *the first row shall be a SARDIUS, a TOPAZ, and a CARBUNCLE: this shall be the first row. And the second row shall be an*

EMERALD, a **SAPPHIRE**, and a **DIAMOND**. And the third row a **LIGURE**, (supposed to have been a **HYACINTH**) an **AGATE**, and an **AMETHYST**. And the fourth row a **BERYL**, and an **ONYX**, and a **JASPER**: they shall be set in gold in their inclosings.” Ibid. The profound skill, in the lapidary’s art, which the Hebrews then learned of the Egyptians, they have retained ever since; and are, in consequence, at this day, the most expert of all people in the world, in the knowledge of the value of precious stones, and in the science of cutting them to the best advantage.

In a former page of this work, when speaking of the figures of men and animals, impressed upon the bricks that formed the walls of the palace of Babylon, painted to resemble life, and the *colours burnt* into the crude material, I took occasion to remark that this was the earliest specimen of enamel on record. The idea, however, having been combated by authority which I respect, I shall here add a word or two in defence of my opinion. The Latin term *encaustum*, used by Pliny for *enamel*, I thought, fully justified me in that remark, though certainly that specimen must have been of the rudest kind. In the passage, however, above cited, respecting the smaragdine fruit, another striking proof is exhibited of the early existence of the art of *enamelling*, for the *berries* of *emerald* could only have obtained their green hue by the aid of the fire of the chemist. Another instance of the early maturity of that art may be adduced in the shield of Achilles, so beautifully described by Homer in the 18th Iliad, with all its gorgeous decorations. Whoever considers

that shield, and surveys, in that description, its various compartments ; the stars shining in the blue expanse above ; the sea rolling its *azure* waves around the border ; lofty cities lifting their aspiring heads in one place, and cultivated fields waving their *golden treasures* in another ; the horrors of battle, contrasted with the delights of peace ; and, in short, the whole universe represented in the most glowing colours ;—must, I think, be convinced that nearly 1200 years before Christ (the period of the Trojan war, to which period it properly has reference, and was probably formed from some model which the poet had seen in Asia, with additional ornaments created by his own fertile imagination) the art of enamelling must have been not only known, but must have flourished in no small degree of vigour. It should not be omitted that, in this animated representation, or historical picture, a vineyard forms one of the compartments of the shield, the luxuriant purple clusters in which are particularly noticed, and those rich and deep tints could only have been fixed in the metal by the operation of fire.

A greater object now demands our attention ; the golden statue itself erected by this vain-glorious monarch, whom the late terrible judgement inflicted upon him by heaven, and recorded in the fourth chapter of Daniel, for his arrogance and blasphemy, had not reclaimed from the insane career of his idolatry. It was after this dreadful calamity, according to the ablest chronologers, who place his death in the following year, or *ante A. D. 562*, when he had been *driven from men*, and compelled to *take up his abode with the*

beasts of the field during seven years, that he set up this mighty image, unequalled through all antiquity, to brave the most high God. “*Nebuchadnezzar the king* (says the sacred historian) *made an image of gold, whose height was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits.*” Dan. iii. 1. The vast dimensions of this colossal figure, so far exceeding in intrinsic worth and magnitude all the statues ever previously formed of the precious metals, have been matter of no less embarrassment to the pious commentator upon Scripture than of impious ridicule to the daring sceptic. The intelligent and orthodox Prideaux himself was evidently perplexed by the circumstance, and, contrary to the express words of the text, would willingly substitute *feet* for *cubits*. His observations on this subject are as follows. “The temple of Belus stood till the time of Xerxes ; but he, on his return from his Grecian expedition, demolished the whole of it, and laid it all in rubbish, having first plundered it of all its immense riches, among which were several images or statues of massy gold, and one which is said by Diodorus Siculus to have been forty feet high, which might perchance have been that which Nebuchadnezzar consecrated in the plains of Dura. Nebuchadnezzar’s golden image is said, indeed, in Scripture, to have been sixty cubits, i. e. ninety feet high ; but that must be understood of the image and pedestal both together. For that image being stated to have been but six cubits broad, or thick, it is impossible, that the image could have been sixty cubits high. For that makes its height to be ten times its breadth, or thickness, which exceeds all

the proportions of a man ; no man's height being above six times his thickness, measuring the slenderest man living at his waist. But where the breadth of his image was measured, is not said ; perchance it was from shoulder to shoulder ; and then the proportion of six cubits breadth will bring down the height exactly to the measure which Diodorus hath mentioned. For the usual height of a man being four and a half of his breadth between the shoulders, if the image were six cubits broad between the shoulders, it must, according to this proportion, have been twenty-seven cubits high, which is forty foot and an half. Besides, Diodorus tells us, that this image, of forty foot high, contained a thousand Babylonish talents of gold ; which, according to Pollux, who, in his Onomasticon, reckons a Babylonish talent to contain 7000 Attic drachmas, i. e. 875 ounces, amounts to three millions and an half of our money. But if we advance the height of the statue to ninety foot without the pedestal, it will increase the value to a sum incredible, and therefore it is necessary to take the pedestal also into the height mentioned by Daniel. Other images and sacred utensils were also in that temple, all of solid gold*."

A desire to bring the testimony of profane writers, when attainable, in corroboration of Scriptural representation, is laudable, and the statue of gold, *forty feet high*, mentioned by Diodorus as well as

* Prideaux's Connect. p. 100, 101, vol. i. p. 79, folio edit.

the account in Herodotus of a statue of the same metal, twelve cubits in height, found by Xerxes in the temple of Belus at a later period, are very remarkable circumstances, and prove that a golden statue of extraordinary dimensions had been preserved in that temple. But these general testimonies from profane historians avail not to shake the positive assertion of the sacred penman in regard to the height being 60 cubits, *including the pedestal*, for the judicious reasons adduced by the learned dean. It was evidently the determination of Nebuchadnezzar, who had, doubtless, in his expedition to Egypt visited Thebes, and examined the colossal figures erected there, and particularly the Memnonian statue, fifty feet in height, that the statue of Belus in gold should exceed in magnitude the loftiest of those statues in Thebaic marble. The 60 cubits making 90 feet, if we allow 20 of the cubits for the pedestal, or 30 feet, the 40 cubits remaining will give to the image the height of 60 feet. Astonishing and even incredible as the amount of the treasure necessary to form so vast an image may appear to us, yet a due attention to the character of the man, and the history of his resources, will greatly tend to lessen our astonishment in this respect.

A short retrospective survey of the wide conquests achieved, and the vast spoils obtained, by that monarch in Asia, during the forty-two years in which he sate upon the throne of Babylon, will remove much of our doubt of what Diodorus has recorded concerning the wealth amassed in Babylon, and treasured in the

temple of Belus. He was early trained in the discipline and habits of war, and was sent into Egypt at the head of a vast army to reduce it, by his father Nabopolassar, in the year before Christ 604. He was completely successful in that expedition, and before his return added to his conquest that of Syria and Phœnicia. Nabopolassar dying the following year, he immediately mounted the vacant throne. With the accumulated spoils obtained during these wars, he is expressly said, by Josephus, to have adorned the temple of Belus, and to have commenced the great works which he had planned for the enlargement and improvement of the metropolis of his empire. In the eighth year of his reign, or A. C. 596, he marched to Jerusalem, took it, and is said to have carried away thence all the treasures of the temple and of the king's palace, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold, which Solomon had made in the temple, 2 Kings xxiv. 13. With these sacred spoils he still further enriched the temple of his God; ten thousand captives of rank, the flower of Judea, attended his triumphant march to Babylon. He afterwards raised Zedekiah to a degraded throne, and a depopulated kingdom; but, Zedekiah revolting, he inflicted upon him and his country that terrible predicted vengeance which brought on the *seventy years* captivity of that miserable people. After burning Jerusalem and its famed temple to the ground, and consigning its inhabitants to undistinguished slaughter, he marched back to his capital with all the remaining vessels of gold, silver, and brass, which he had before spared for the use of the temple

and the palace, and with a whole captive nation in his train ; none but the poorest inhabitants being left behind, to dress the vines and till the ground.

It was not until the twenty-first year of his reign, or the year before Christ 584, that this powerful prince commenced his expedition against Tyre, and during this long interval, he seems to have employed himself and the immense treasures he had acquired in enlarging and beautifying Babylon, in constructing those vast walls, and, from the plunder of Jerusalem chiefly, those huge gates of brass which, Herodotus informs us, were in his time still to be seen*. That populous and wealthy city, strongly fortified on the land side, and open to receive constant supplies by the way of the sea, resisted for thirteen years the whole force of the Babylonian empire, combined to overthrow it ; but, at the termination of that period, Tyre bowed its head before this irresistible conqueror, who took possession of its immense treasures of every kind, and, conformably to the prophecy of Ezekiel, so utterly demolished it, that it never again recovered its former grandeur, though on its ruins the insular Tyre, that still more renowned city destroyed by Alexander many years afterwards, arose to the highest point of glory and opulence. Thence, Nebuchadnezzar marched with his army into Egypt, and, victory still attending his banners, he plundered

* Herodotus, Clio, sect. 183.

and laid waste that whole country, from the shore of the Mediterranean to the borders of Ethiopia. Loaded with the additional spoils of this vast empire, and an innumerable train of captives, he then returned, in the year before Christ 570, to the completion of his great designs at Babylon.

Through these channels, the greater part of the wealth of Asia, and much of the treasures of Africa, had flowed into the coffers of this mighty monarch, and afforded him full opportunity for the utmost display of that magnificence to which he was so partial. When Cyrus took Babylon some years afterwards, though it is reasonable to conclude that much of it had been expended in defending themselves and their city against his repeated assaults, it must be supposed that no small portion of this accumulated treasure fell into his hands, and formed the basis of that amazing wealth which overflowed the treasury of the succeeding kings of the Persian dynasty. Of the measure and extent of their opulence, some idea may be formed from the account given by Diodorus Siculus and Strabo of the enormous wealth found by Alexander in the different capitals of that empire. From the plundered capital of Susa, he carried away no less than nine thousand talents of coined gold, and of gold and silver bullion forty thousand talents*. At Persepolis, the trea-

* Diodorus Siculus, lib. xviii. cap. 66.

sure found amounted to such an enormous sum, that, besides three thousand camels which were loaded with it, all the adjoining countries were drained of their mules, asses, and other beasts of burthen, to convey it away from a city, on which he wreaked his particular and unrelenting vengeance, in return for the impolitic burning of the Grecian temples by Xerxes*. The total aggregate, in bullion, obtained at Persepolis, Diodorus states at one hundred and twenty thousand talents of gold, independant of the precious gems, the costly furniture, the vessels of crystal and agate, the vests of Tyrian purple and gold embroidery, found in profusion in the houses of the Persian nobles and merchants. At the taking of Damascus, after the battle of Issus, Alexander found in the royal coffers, two thousand six hundred talents, in coined money, and five hundred in bullion, which, with the other treasures taken in that wealthy city, loaded seven thousand mules. Ten thousand talents, at one time, and thirty thousand at another, were the sums offered by Darius to Alexander, as the ransom of his captive wife and daughters. The battle of Arbela put him in possession of all the costly utensils and splendid equipages of Darius, with four thousand talents in money. In Pasargada he found six thousand talents ; and, in the royal city of Ecbatana, according to Strabo†, no less than one hundred and eighty thousand talents.

* Diodorus Siculus, lib. xviii. p. 62.

† Strabonis Geograph. lib. xv. p. 741.

Of the immense wealth, thus accumulated in Persia, and seized by Alexander in the capitals of that vast empire, at that time partitioned out into 127 provinces, as we read it was in Daniel, one abundant source, it should be remembered, was the Indian commerce, and the tribute paid by the Indian emperor, which, according to Herodotus, was 360 talents of gold; a talent for every day of the Persian year, at that time consisting of 360 days only; another strong proof of that astronomical mode of calculation used in conducting public affairs in the court of Persia, of which I have given so many before. Those talents were of the Euboic kind, which are stated by Arbuthnot to be equal to 3000*l.* of our money, and consequently the whole amount was nearly 1,100,000, sterling, from *India alone!* The Indians, also, were well skilled in the art of making golden statues, of which metal and silver, in ancient times, studded with gems, their AVATARS were formed, and from age to age glutted the avarice of their rapacious conquerors, from Darius to Mahmud of Gazna.

From the preceding statements in respect to the extensive conquests made by Nebuchadnezzar in Asia and Egypt, and the immense spoils taken in the course of his wars, it must be apparent to the reader that, however large the statue, which that monarch might chuse to erect in Dura, his treasury must have afforded ample means for fulfilling his intentions, and completing the image. There is no necessity, however, for our supposing it to have been all of solid gold, although the statue of Belus mentioned by Diodorus as the

distinguishing ornament of that temple, is stated to have been of massy gold, and to have weighed a thousand Babylonian talents*. It was doubtless of a substance proportioned to its height ; and being of such magnitude it could not well have been formed in a mould ; although, from the vast gates of brass, which adorned that temple, we have seen that the Babylonians were expert in the fusion of metals. It was, in all likelihood, fabricated exactly as Diodorus acquaints us the statues of Jupiter and Rhea were, wrought by the hammer, *σφυρηλατα*, *malleo ductæ*, composed by the artists in separate pieces, and afterwards skilfully joined together in one mass. The gold was probably of that pure kind, mentioned in the commencement of these strictures, easily wrought and rendered ductile without the operation of fire. In like manner, we read in scripture that the figures of the cherubim, and of the candlestick with seven branches, were of *beaten gold*, of the purest and consequently most malleable kind.

The unwieldy statue in question, was the production of an age devoted, as we have seen through the whole of these and preceding strictures, to the construction of images of a colossal kind ; of a race of men, who thought the deity and his attributes could only properly be represented by massy sculptures and gigantic symbols. The enormous magnitude of the figure they conceived would strike

* Diod. Sic. lib. ii. p. 98.

astonishment and terror into the soul of the prostrate worshipper, and bind him faster in the adamantine chains of superstition. Magnificent, however, in respect to size and sterling value, as was this statue, no superior excellence of *design* was probably displayed in its fabrication. It was intended to excite awful, rather than pleasing, ideas. A general, if not an accurate, knowledge of the rules of sculptural proportion they certainly possessed, and that knowledge was here displayed in its utmost extent. In regard to its magnitude, be it remembered that if Nebuchadnezzar, in times denominated barbarous, raised in Babylon a statue 90 feet high, that, in a later and more polished age, Nero, by the skilful hand of Zenodorus, raised one of brass to his own honour, in the capital of the Roman empire, of the height of 110 feet, and that both these prodigies are still very far inferior to the gigantic conception of Dinoocrates, who, as was before observed, offered to cut mount Athos into a figure of Alexander the great.

This colossal image, we are told, was erected in the plain of DURA, by some thought to have been situated without the walls of the city of Babylon, since D'Anville's ancient geography mentions a place of this name on the Tigris, at this day called *Dour*; but it was more probably erected within the area, the *περιβολος*, of the temple, which was of vast extent, being inclosed, as we are informed by Herodotus, by a wall, two miles and an half in circumference, and consequently afforded room enough for its complete display, and the adoration of the prostrate multitude.

It would be improper to conclude this head, without informing the reader, that Mr. Taylor, the respectable editor and commentator of Calmet, is of opinion that this grand image was sculptured in a sitting posture, conformably to the model of the great statues of Memnon and Osiris, which Nebuchadnezzar had recently contemplated in the Thebaid ; and that not only the *pedestal*, according to the hypothesis of Dr. Prideaux, should be taken into the calculation of the altitude of the figure, but likewise the high mitred *bonnet* with which the images of the Solar deity in the east were usually crowned, by which that altitude will be further reduced by eight or ten feet*. The observation is marked with the usual judgement and accurate knowledge of eastern manners and costume evinced by that author throughout his instructive work ; equally pertinent too is his additional remark that Diodorus was in an error in giving to Jupiter either an *erect* or *walking* attitude, which are decidedly contrary to the religious prejudices of the eastern nations†.

* See Fragments elucidatory of Calmet's Dictionary of the Bible, vol. iii. page 116.

† All the sculptured figures of Osiris, Isis, and other Egyptian deities in the British Museum, are in a sitting posture, to mark, it is presumed, the centered stability and serene repose which the divine nature enjoys.

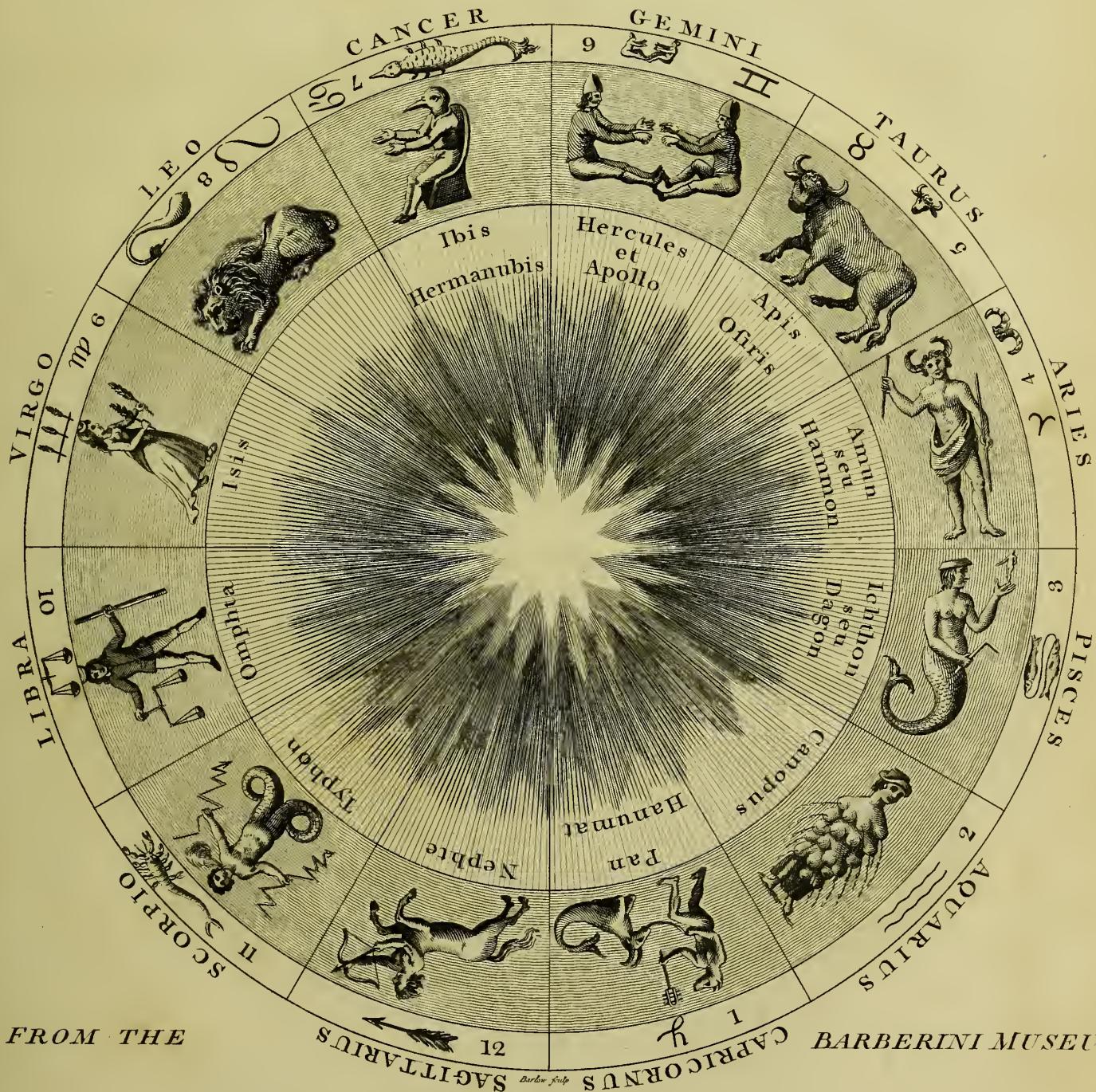
STRICTURES ON THE SUPERSTITIOUS RITES OF THE EGYPTIANS, PARTICULARLY ON THE NEFAIRIOUS WORSHIP PAID TO BEASTS, ESTEEMED SACRED, AND CALLED IN SCRIPTURE THE ABOMINATIONS OF EGYPT.

If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness, and my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand, Job. xxxi. 26.—So said the virtuous Job, asserting, at the same time, his innocence of the crime alluded to. This passage in the ancient book that bears his name marks, at once, the general prevalence in the east, and the high antiquity of the solar superstition. Arabia, bordering on Chaldæa, perhaps earliest of the Asiatic nations caught the infection, and, from what has previously been stated, I presume it is apparent that Egypt was not slow in imitating her pernicious example.

If, however, it should be thought that, from the evidence adduced in the preceding pages, the worship of the sun, in Egypt, represented by the pointed column, symbolical of his ray, should not be as fully proved to have existed as in Babylon, let us have recourse to other corroborative arguments and emblems. The most ancient religious rites of the Egyptian people, after they had left the caverns of the Thebais, it is natural to suppose, were practised in its oldest erected temple; and all antiquity unites in affirming that temple to have been at Heliopolis, the city of the sun, in Lower Egypt, sometimes called ON, a name

THE ANCIENT ZODIAC OF EGYPT

WITH THE ORIGINAL ASTERISMS.



supposed by Sir W. Jones to be of congenial import with the most sacred Hindoo word om, which means the *solar flame*. We read in Genesis of the *priest of on*, and of Joseph's being married to the daughter of this priest: therefore, so early as in Joseph's day, that system of worship was established; and that in Moses's time, the adoration of BEASTS, denominated sacred, also flourished in full vigour, we know for certain from the answer of that legislator to Pharaoh, when he requested permission to go and sacrifice in the wilderness, quod si mactaverimus ea quæ colunt Ægyptii, coram eis, lapidibus nos obruent. *If we sacrifice the objects of the Egyptian worship, before their eyes, they will stone us.* Exodus viii. v. 26.

A part of the inscription, above alluded to, on the southern face of the Heliopolitan obelisk, translated into Greek by Hermapion, ran thus, and will exhibit farther proof of the existence at this temple, in front of which stood that obelisk, of the solar worship. "The sun to king RAMESSES. I give thee the empire of all the world to possess in peace, thou who art the well beloved of the sun and of (Horus) Apollo. The valiant son of Heron, begotten of God, founder of the universe, whom the sun hath elected, the valiant and martial king RAMESSES, who by his strength and fortitude hath subjected all the earth to his empire, even the king RAMESSES, immortal son of the sun*".

* Hermapion apud Ammianus Marcellinus, lib. 17, p. 102, edit. Lindenbrog.

For the general and almost unbounded prevalence throughout Asia, of this splendid superstition, some excuse may be found in the admiration which so glorious an orb as the sun, shining in the full splendor of an eastern sky, naturally inspires. The benefits, also, bestowed on mankind by its genial beam, commanded their gratitude ; and we might be tempted to exclaim, with the poet—

"*Twere strange for heathens not to have adored !*

but for the base and degrading superstition, just alluded to, and so universal through Egypt, no such plausible reason appears to sanction its enormity. Indeed this monstrous, this *insane*, (as to us it appears,) this abominable, **WORSHIP OF BEASTS** and some of them the most horrid and loathsome in nature, as dogs, cats, rats, wolves, owls, and even of *plants*, as leeks and onions, a worship which Juvenal so forcibly ridicules in those well known verses—

O sanctas gentes, quibus hæc nascuntur in hortis
Numina !

by so wise and enlightened a people as the Egyptians, has excited in every age of the world the utmost surprise and indignation. While, however, we indignantly reprobate a species of idolatry which, as just observed, seems to border on insanity, let us still be *just* to this ancient people, and investigate the source of a conduct apparently so impious and inexcusable.

Jablonski, one of the most judicious among the interpreters of the sacred rites of Egypt, is by no means inclined to accuse them of

direct atheism*; though he admits that a species of Pantheism, or that **GOD IS ALL**—in other words, that the *divine spirit is the soul of the world*, according to the philosophy of the Greek schools, which probably originated in those of Egypt, where its earliest sages studied, pervades the whole system of the Egyptian religion. He very properly appeals for the truth of this statement to the inscription on the statue of **ISIS** in her temple of Sais; **I AM THAT WHICH IS, THAT WHICH HAS BEEN, AND THAT WHICH SHALL BE. NO MORTAL HATH EVER REMOVED MY VEIL. THE FRUIT EN-GENDERED BY ME WAS THE SUN.** Nobler properties and a more exalted rank are, however, assigned by Porphyry, Eusebius, and others, to the great and uncreated God, **CNEPH**, worshipped in the Thebais, who was symbolized by a serpent, the emblem of immortality, and supposed to be a personification of the **DIVINE GOODNESS** itself, whence he was called the **Agathodæmon**, or good genius, of Egypt. Under the name **PHTHA**, too, another of their deities, a supreme intelligence was adored, incomprehensible in his nature, but visible in the wonderful works and beings which he had formed, of which the **SUN** was his brightest symbol; and finally their **NEITH**, or Minerva, was considered as the **DIVINE WISDOM** personified†. All this, as the great Cudworth justly contends, is very far removed from atheism: although it denoted a system of

* Vide Panthæon Egyptiorum, under the article *Cneph*, p. 84, edit. Oct. 1750.

† See Jablonski, under the words *Phtha* and *Neith*, pages 29 and 60, idem edit.

religion far below the unsullied purity of the Noachic creed of faith*. The most ancient race of Egyptians seem to have believed in the unity of God, but they degraded his majesty by attempting to personify that which admitted of no corporeal similitude. They fervently adored the deity in his works; they expressed that fervent adoration, by numerous and expressive images and symbols; but the first virtuous impressions gradually wearing away, the greater part of the nation in the lapse of revolving ages withdrew their thoughts from the great architect himself, and paid to the symbol that homage only due to the divine original. Their addiction to physics, and their love of astronomy, united in a great degree to operate this deplorable change in their principles and conduct.

In all ages and countries, however, there have existed those of more exalted spirit, and of nobler intellect, who, conscious of the immortality of the soul of man, and acting up to that high character, have dared to think for themselves, and have pierced through the gloom, even the deep Egyptian gloom, which superstition in every age has laboured to spread over the fair aspect of genuine religion. It would be an insult to the genius of those who were the masters of Thales, Pythagoras, and Plato, to suppose that no man of this exalted stamp arose in that country to dissipate this

† See Cudworth's Intellectual System, chap. iv. sect 18, folio edit.

gloom; on the contrary, if Warburton's assertions be founded in fact, that to inculcate the unity of God was the principal object in the *ancient mysteries*, the earliest known celebrations of which took place in the cavern-recesses of Egypt, it was from that philosophic race—from those secret cells of initiation—alta terra et caligine mersas—that the sublime dogma in question issued forth and was circulated, together with those mysteries, through all the nations of Asia Minor and Greece. I say the *Minor Asia*, because those of the Higher Asia had mysteries peculiar to themselves, and a mythology in many respects widely different from that of the Egyptians. In one striking particular, however, their doctrines were remarkably consonant, as I shall now proceed to demonstrate.

Although, according to the hypothesis adopted in this work, which considers the higher Asia as the primordial country of theological and all other sciences, the doctrine of the two PRINCIPLES, that is, of Good and Evil, perpetually contending with each other for the government of the world, is presumed to have originated among the Persians, as exemplified in the allegory of Oromasdes and Ahriman*; yet does that dogma seem to have been not less predominant, in very ancient periods, among that branch of Noah's family which settled in Egypt. In fact, in the everlasting combat between Osiris and Typhon may be observed

* See this doctrine extensively discussed, in Indian Antiquities, vol. ii. p. 69.

the exact counterpart of the Persian doctrine. However pure, therefore, or approaching to purity, in the first instance, as seems evidently to have been the fact, might have been the theology of Egypt, it certainly by degrees degenerated into a system of gross physics ; a system in which allegory and hieroglyphics usurped the place of sound and substantial devotion.

The phænomena of nature in that country were peculiarly calculated to keep alive and active this spirit of physical inquiry among that allegorizing race. Without excluding a great all-ruling cause, a primeval $\Delta\etaμιςργος$, or sovereign architect, they considered him as residing at an immense distance from the world which he had formed ; and as little occupied by the care of it. I must here do myself the justice to remark, that this unworthy conception of the Supreme Being, which pervades the whole system of the Egyptian theology, has been before pointed out in the Indian Antiquities, (vol. iv. p. 20,) where it is justly stigmatized “as representing the throne of God to be centered in an abyss of intense darkness, and himself as $\lambda\phi\alpha\nu\eta\; και\; κεκρυμμενος$, *invisible* and *occult*,” and merits again the severest reprobation, as being not only directly contrary to the cheerful aspect, which creation itself, **HIS** mighty work, exhibits ; but as being so glaringly opposed to that true and sublime idea expressed of **HIM** in our scriptures, as the Being who dwells in the centre of surrounding light, inaccessible indeed to all but the just and holy, but by beings of that pure nature surrounded and glorified through all eternity. To use the animated language

of those scriptures—*'T'hou sand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him,* Daniel vii. 10. Indeed, the whole description of the true and only Δημιουργος in this chapter is unspeakably sublime, and far transcends all that the ancient theologians of Egypt, Persia, or India, ever conceived or expressed of the deity. I am irresistibly led, amidst this display of false theological systems, to insert the whole passage, by way of contrast to their degrading representations. “*I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the ANCIENT OF DAYS did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool; his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgement was set, and the books were opened,*” ibid. After this short and, I trust, pardonable digression in favour of the superior claim to admiration of our own admirable code of faith, I proceed with the further investigation of that of Egypt.

Osiris, Isis, and their son Horus, whose characters and attributes we shall hereafter distinctly consider, were the delegated agents of the supreme authority of this great inscrutable being, and their contests with Typhon, the evil genius of their country, who reigned among the fens and marshes of Egypt, and scattered pestilence and death around him, formed the basis of all their mythology. It was, in fact, a perpetual struggle for victory between the *dry* and the *humid* principle; the allegory must, there-

fore, have its origin in the highest antiquity, and carries us back to the period when Egypt, at least the Lower Egypt, was not yet wholly freed from the inundating waters of the Deluge, of which, as of every other evil in nature, Typhon was deemed the expressive symbol. Plutarch, in one part of his admirable treatise *de Iside et Osiride*, explains this allegory, as alluding to the passions of the mind. Whatever, says he, is generous and benignant in the human soul is the express image of Osiris ; whatever, on the other hand, is boisterous and malignant, belongs to the dominion of Typhon. The Egyptian allegory, however, principally has reference to physics and the material world. The wonderful and varied phænomena that attended and marked the seasons in that singular country peculiarly engaged their attention. The important period of the annual inundation, announced by the Heliacal rising of the dog-star, their adored Anubis, and of the regular blowing of the Etesian northëry winds, absorbed their whole contemplation. The exact knowledge of these circumstances was to them of the deepest moment ; their welfare, nay, their very existence, depended upon it ; for by that knowledge only could the husbandman regulate his labours, and the earth be rendered productive.

Except, then, to those favoured few of heaven-born mind above alluded to, who looked behind the veil which Isis wore, the Egyptian scheme of theology, as before asserted, presented nothing for contemplation but a gross system of physics. The deities adored by the mass of the nation were only planetary and elementary

divinities, but principally of the planetary kind,—as connected with their astrological speculations. And here, again, we cannot avoid calling to mind that ancient maxim of Macrobius, so often alluded to in preceding pages, that, if accurately examined, all the gods of antiquity finally resolve themselves into the Sun and Moon, and their influences—*Deos omnes ad SOLEM, ad LUNAM deas omnes referri**.—It cannot be more decisively exemplified than on the present occasion, for, in this system,

OSIRIS,

or, in other words, the sun, the great principle of light and heat, with his fiery and penetrating rays, is represented as having dried up the stagnant lakes, dispersed the fatal exhalations, and rendered Egypt habitable to the first race of men. Osiris was represented among their hieroglyphic delineations, sometimes, by a human figure, with the head of a hawk, symbol of light and glory; at others, more mystically, by the characters of an eye and sceptre; the eye that observes, and the sceptre that commands, all things. His symbol was the lordly Bull; adored in that form, and by the well known name of Apis, at Memphis. His affectionate consort,

ISIS,

or the moon personified, with her beneficent and milder beams, rendered the earth fertile, and productive of all the various fruits of

* Macrobius Saturnal. lib. ii. cap. 10.

the revolving seasons. As she receives her light from the Sun, she was considered as the passive principle in the great kingdom of nature, though she is sometimes, by ancient mythologists, described as of both sexes ; and is not unfrequently styled Deus Lunus. Isis is represented among the hieroglyphics as a female with many breasts, with a large veil covering her head and shoulders, and with wide spread wings, as over-shadowing and fertilizing nature. She is synonymous with the earth, and is known indeed by a thousand names, whence her appellation of *myrionyma*. Her symbol was the prolific cow, and she was worshipped under that form at Heliopolis.

HORUS,

their son, the first production of their power, seems to have been *light* personified, or, as some designate his character, the fleeting *hours*, to which the revolutions of the Sun and Moon give birth. Jablonski considers him as the sun himself at the summer solstice*. The hieroglyphic form of Horus is an infant in the arms of his mother Isis, swathed about, in conformity to the idea just mentioned of his being the emblem of the new born day, and the whip of Osiris, that well-known symbol of the Lord of day, often ornaments his hand.

* Panth. Ægypt. article Horus, p. 216.

The nature and qualities of the destructive TYPHON

are best explained by the Arabic word *touphon*, signifying *deluge*, or by the Greek term, *τυφων*, a whirlwind; whence the name *typhonic* is applied to those dreadful phænomena of the deep, called water-spouts. His deathful residence was amidst the fens of Pelusium; and, I must again repeat, that, in the perpetual and sanguinary contests carried on between these mighty chieftains, consists the whole physical theology of Egypt. The convulsions of nature, in a climate subject to considerable vicissitudes, could not fail indeed of entering deeply into any system of theology they might form. Benignant skies, an abundant Nile, and plentiful seasons, were the gift of the beneficent Osiris. On the contrary, the burning winds, wafting destruction from the Lybian desert that assailed them on one side, and the pestilential vapours from the Pelusian marshes and the Sirbonian gulph that annoyed them on the other, were alike the effect of the rage of Typhon. If the sea broke in tempestuous billows upon the low and flat coast of Egypt, and desolated the maritime region adjoining; if a failure in the inundation of the waters of the Nile caused a drought in the land; or if a baleful eclipse of the solar light plunged the affrighted nation in temporary darkness; in each distressing emergency, the calamity was attributed to the same fatal influence. Osiris was, indeed, eventually vanquished and even destroyed by the enraged Typhon, yet is the triumph of the evil principle but momentary:

he was again and again overcome by his son Horus, his avatar, to borrow an Indian term ; and, the Gods themselves taking the part of the latter, he was finally struck with thunderbolts, and drowned in the Gulph Sirbon. This allegory of the destruction of Osiris by Typhon, related many different ways in their fabulous history, has perplexed many able mythologists. But it probably has an allusion to some great national calamity, or convulsion of nature, in very remote æras ; either the general deluge, or some vast inundation by the sea, whom Typhon represents ; but which calamity was averted, and the waters repelled by Horus, his son, a manifestation of his renovated power.

It seems to have been the express aim of Plutarch, in the treatise above referred to, *de Iside et Osiride*, to impress upon the mind of his readers the idea that the system of the Egyptian theology throughout admitted of a twofold interpretation ; being in one respect calculated for the holy and initiated, and in another for mere vulgar contemplation and credulity. Thus the priests of Egypt, like those of the Grecian schools, in succeeding ages, had their secret as well as their avowed principles ; thier *esoteric*, as well as their *exoteric*, doctrines ; and it follows, as a necessary result of his statements, that the figures of animals, engraved in their temples, as well as the living animals themselves, cherished with such pious care in their adyta, which they *seemed* to adore, were only so many hieroglyphical symbols, intended to represent the divine perfections and attributes. Impressed with these ideas, they were induced, not

less by the dictates of philosophy than their mystical theology, to explore nature, widely and deeply, for objects best suited to explain their symbolical doctrines in each science. By these they endeavoured to shadow out, as far as they would admit of it, the divine attributes; and to express the operations of the supreme cause in the various and wonderful works of creation. It was a symbolic devotion, therefore, to which they were so grossly addicted. They worshipped in these symbols the *numen* whose name they bore, and whose attributes they shadowed out; they honoured them as the shrines of the indwelling deity, and madly supposed them sanctified by his presence.

In this extensive inquiry, their excursive genius now ranged the heights of æther, and now plunged into the depths of the ocean. They scrupulously examined the properties and qualities of all animals and plants, and, as they saw a latent divinity in all,—since, according to their creed,—**MENS agitat molem, et toto se corpore miscet**,—they scrupled not to pay a sort of holy reverence to whatever appeared to be endowed with transcendant excellence and superior energy. However humble, or even disgusting in appearance, the selected object, they exalted it in the sanctuary, and honoured in it the radiant image of the deity. It was a mirror, they said, that reflected the rays of the resplendent godhead. Thus, the

SERPENT,

a reptile, for which mankind have in general the greatest abhorrence, was, on account of the great age which it sometimes attains,

and of its revirescence, after the shedding of its skin, venerated as a symbol of Immortality ; and the obscene

GOAT

ranked in the highest order of Egyptian deities, as the significant emblem of the great generative power of nature. That power was, therefore, called PAN, the ALL, the personified universe ; and there were consecrated images of him, according to Diodorus, in every temple throughout Egypt. It was at Mendez, however, that he was worshipped with the greatest solemnities, and there the largest animal of the species that could be found was cherished in pampered luxury. On his breast glittered a resplendent STAR, which was emblematical of the starry firmament, while his horns, ever the emblem of glory in the east, typified the rays of the sun, which illuminated that firmament. His shaggy legs and feet denoted the asperities of the earth, and the woods and wildernesses with which it is covered.

In respect to SERPENT WORSHIP, so universal in Asia, though much has been already said in these pages, yet much more remains to be discussed ; for, in fact, the serpent is a never failing subject of contemplation and wonder in all the theological systems of the eastern world ; among the Egyptian symbolical animals, he acted a most decided and prominent part. Independently of the great CNEPH being represented by that animal, as mentioned above ; a serpent of a *blue* colour, with *yellow* scales, it will be recollectcd, symbolized

the universe ; the blue colour, according to Horus Apollo*, denoted the firmament ; the yellow scales, the golden stars with which it is studded. His body wreathed in a circle, with his tail in his mouth, was a well-known emblem of eternity, that mighty cycle without beginning and without end : and their bodies, twisted around the caduceus or wand of Hermes, figured out the obliquity of the course of the sun. Here, also, may properly be noticed another of the serpentine tribe, in high request among them as an astronomical symbol ; I mean the reptile whose friendly poison saved from the indignity of attending the triumphal car of Cæsar the last of the Grecian sovereigns of Egypt. The ASP, from its moving along with great facility and glibness, without any perceptible organs for motion, was considered a just emblem of the celestial orbs, gliding swiftly, but silently, through the expanse of heaven.

In that valuable and venerable basaltic fragment preserved in the British Museum, (9th Room, No. 15.) on which the COPT is represented devoutly kneeling before the Serpent erected in voluminous folds upon his own altar, that of the sun, of whom he was the symbol, we have a striking specimen of the mode of worship anciently paid to that animal. It has, probably, like the other basaltic fragment, (No. 17.) its companion, formed part of

* Hieroglyphica, p. 12.

the frieze of a most ancient solar temple, both having been sent from Egypt to England, by the late Mr. Wortley Montague. The kneeling figure, bearing in his hand, as an offering to the deity adored, a small pyramid exactly resembling those engraved on the Persepolitan monument, and the walls of Istakhar, renders it an object still more interesting, that pyramid being in both cases symbolical of the venerated beam of the sun. The serpentine figure thus adored was probably intended for the great Cneph, or Cnuphis himself, to whom, as the beneficent sovereign of the universe, according to Strabo, a superb temple was erected at Elephantine, of which, however, we are informed by Mr. Hamilton, no traces are now visible.

Among other causes of this abominable species of idolatry, so degrading to a race who, according to the just observation of the accurate investigator of Egyptian antiquities just mentioned, without an express revelation, certainly entertained and " promulgated the doctrine of a future life *," may be prominently placed their belief in the **METEMPSYCHOSIS**, intimately connected with that doctrine. The Egyptians, Herodotus informs us, believed the soul successively to pass through the bodies of animals terrestrial, aquatic, and aërial, whence it returned to animate its original tenement, and finished the ample circuit of its peregrination in three thousand years. Hence arose their anxious care to keep that original

* See Hamilton's *Ægyptiaca*, p. 57.

body entire by means of embalming it, and inclosing it in a case of Sycamore, a wood thought to be of an imperishable nature ; hence, too, a strong suspicion results, that the pyramids were actually *intended* for sepulchres, whether so applied or not. It was this notion of the transmigration of the soul, doubtless, that gave birth to those hideous figures as they appear to us, with the heads of the cat, the hawk, the dog, the ibis, &c. so numerous in Egypt, and so many of which are still to be seen in European cabinets, and in very great variety among the Egyptian curiosities in the British Museum*.

But ASTRONOMY had by far the greatest influence over the Egyptians, in promoting this nefarious species of worship. The superstitious veneration paid by them to the superior animals, the bull, the lion, &c. was dictated principally by this consideration, as they constituted the zodiacal asterisms, through which their beloved Osiris, the governor of the world, had moved, and in passing through them had imparted to them a portion of his essence, a ray of his divinity. Thus the sign ARIES, or, rather, SOL in ARIES, when the astronomical year commenced, was the splendid object

* In the room where the human mummies are placed, vases, containing also the bodies of the sacred animals embalmed, are arranged, with their respective heads rudely sculptured upon each vase. These figures were inhumed, together with the embalmed human bodies with which they are generally found, it is supposed, to guard them against injury from malignant daemons.

of their veneration in the worship paid to the
RAM,

consecrated in the temple of Jupiter Ammon : hence the **KIDS**, the original **GEMINI** of the sphere, were adored with such peculiar fervour of devotion at Mendez ; while the

BULL,

worshipped with such a profusion of honours at Memphis, and the
LION

at Leontopolis, those distinguished asterisms, the causes of whose canonization have been so amply detailed*, were only representatives of the animals of that same description in the heavens. While in their symbolic worship the living animal before them received their external homage, the real objects of their devotion were the celestial Bull, and the Lion, and Ram, of the zodiac.

Though an imaginary being, we must not wholly in this place pass by the mysterious

SPHINX,

an astronomical symbol, compounded, as was asserted by ancient mythologists, of Leo and Virgo, under which signs in August and September Egypt was inundated. By later mythologists, however, this derivation of the symbol has been much doubted, as in very remote periods that inundation must have taken place under *other*

* See the preceding portion of this work under the head **LION**, p. 86.

signs, and it is now generally considered as only a mysterious emblem intended to shadow out the obscure nature of the divinity, and the profound mysteries of religion. Having, however, on other occasions, frequently discussed the subject of the eastern zodiacs, and the symbolical animals pourtrayed upon them, I shall not in this place enter into further details concerning their mysterious allusion, but proceed to examine other parts of this complex and wonderful system.

Theology and the science of nature, according to the Egyptians, constituting one uniform system, we must not wonder to find them occasionally blending in their motley devotion the most opposite and incongruous ideas and objects ; conceptions comparatively sublime and pure with those the most degrading and obscene. Thus the Universal Soul was beautifully represented, in their hieroglyphics, by a

WINGED GLOBE AND SERPENT

emerging from it. The globe represented the infinite divine essence, resembling a sphere, whose centre was every where, and whose circumference no where, as described in the Hermetic writings. The wings of the **HAWK** were intended to denote the divine all-comprehensive intellect ; and the serpent signified the vivifying power of God, which gives life and existence to all things. With these exalted notions relative to the divine nature and attributes, how are we shocked to find these philosophic priests and their disciples plunged into all the obscene excesses of the nefarious phallic worship ; a

striking emblem of which almost every deity pourtrayed, or sculptured, on the walls of their temples carries in his hand. I here allude to that mysterious symbol, generally known by the name of the
CRUX ANSATA,

or, in plainer language, the *cross with the handle*, resembling the Greek *Tau*, by some mythologists thought to be the ΘΟΤΗ, or venerated name of the Genius who presided over the Egyptian sciences ; by others, the sacred instrument by which the gradual increase of the Nile was measured; and, lastly, by others taken for a *compass*, though its direction is so far from being uniformly pointed *northward*, that it is successively directed towards all the cardinal points.

The mystic T, however its allusion was once disputed, is now generally considered, among mythologists, to be an obscure representation of the *human genitals*, and to have been borne in the grasp of the sacred figures representing Osiris, Horus, and other Egyptian deities, under similar impressions as the lingam is worn on the breast of the lascivious devotees of the Indian Seeva. What shall we say again to this philosophic body of priests enjoining or permitting the Egyptian women at the installation of the god Apis at Memphis indecently to expose themselves to the consecrated bull ; or the still grosser prostitution of their persons, as attested by Herodotus, to the sacred goat at Mendez*. That nature, which

* Eusebius præp. Evang. lib. ii. cap. i. Herodot. lib. ii. cap. 46.

they affected so greatly to revere, shudders at enormities like these. Let us turn from these atrocious acts to a species of devotion equally humiliating, but of a far less offensive kind.

The veneration, certainly bordering upon devotion, paid by this allegorizing race to the inferior animals and reptiles, and which appears to us so highly degrading, doubtless arose from a conviction, not only of their utility, but of the absolute necessity of preserving the breed in a country so over-run with vermin of every species as Egypt was after the annual inundation. Among the feathered tribe, exalted in their sacred calendar, the

IBIS

that destroyed the winged serpents, which, coming from Arabia in the spring, according to Diodorus*, overspread Egypt in immense swarms, was held in the highest veneration. How desperate an enemy the Ibis was to that species of serpents, may also be learned from Herodotus, who went on purpose to Butos, a city situated amidst the fens of the lower Egypt, on the confines of Arabia, where those serpents much abounded, both to see the animal itself and the devastation made among them by the Ibis †. He saw there, he says, a prodigious quantity of bones and spines of those animals, that had been killed and devoured by the Ibis. At the commencement of every spring, hosts of them flock hither from Arabia ; and

* Diod. Sic. lib. i. cap. 6.

† Herodotus, lib. ii. cap. 75.

here the Ibis meets, attacks, and destroys them. Hence, he observes, the Egyptians pay divine honours to the Ibis. How fatal was the bite of these serpents, what burning and excruciating pains they occasioned, may be learned from what we read in scripture of their attacks on the rebellious Hebrew race in the wilderness. *And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and much people of Israel died,* Numbers xxi. 9. Egypt, too, is noticed in another part of scripture as the land that produced *the viper and fiery flying serpent*, Isaiah xxx. 6. Well, therefore, might the grateful Egyptians venerate the Ibis that protected them from their envenomed rage; and, in this particular instance, Juvenal seems to have been too severe in applying the term *demens* to this people, when he exclaims—

qualia *demens*

Ægyptus portenta colat? Crocodilon adorat

Pars hæc; illa pavet saturam serpentibus Ibin.

JUV. SAT. 15.

There were also other important reasons for their regarding the Ibis with peculiar respect. The first was of a physical kind; for, this bird, Plutarch relates, originally taught mankind the medicinal use of the clyster, that being the method which it takes to cleanse and purge itself; and, for this purpose, its extended neck and beak are well calculated. The second was founded on their ardent love of geometrical studies; for, according to the same author, the space between its legs, when parted asunder as it walks, together with its beak, forms a complete *equilateral triangle*. Their astronomical spe-

culations inspired them with a third motive of respect for the Ibis, the black and white feathers of this bird being so curiously and alternately blended, as to furnish, to the attentive spectator, a lively representation of the *moon's gibbosity*.

HORNED ADDER.

The Egyptian religion being one of the most opposite extremes, the reader will not be surprised at finding the same class of animals which was the object of alarm and dread under the last head become that of respect and veneration in the present. But the Serpent, in all eastern mythology, was of two kinds; the one benign and placable, the other fraught with rancour and venom. Even in our own pure code of faith, which admits of very few symbols, it will be recollected, that the serpent is at once the emblem of the malignant *destroyer*, and the beneficent **HEALER** of the human race.

We have already mentioned that, under the name of Agathodæmon, the serpent Cnuphis was worshipped at Elephantine in Upper Egypt; and we are informed by Herodotus, that in his time there were sacred serpents preserved near Thebes, who had *two horns* (venerated, consequently, as symbolical of the moon's increasing orb), and that these animals were perfectly harmless*. Above 2000 years after Herodotus, the traveller Savary† mentions serpents as still venerated at Achmim, in that region, by the name of *Haridi*, perfectly innoxious, and as performing miraculous cures. This

* Herodot. lib. ii. cap. 74.

† Savary, vol. 1. p. 467.

seems to be the only remaining vestige of the animal worship of the ancient Egyptians.

It would be unpardonable, in this retrospect on the consecrated objects of Egypt, to pass unnoticed the grand source and object of nearly all these sacred rites, I mean the great river

NILE

itself, denominated, in the enthusiastic language of that devoted people, the father and preserver of the country, and the source of all its happiness and abundance; without whose fertilizing flood Egypt would be converted into an inhospitable desert*. The Nile, therefore, among a race so wholly addicted to idolatry, was necessarily an object of universal adoration; but those rites were, in a more especial manner, paid at Nilopolis, the modern Meidon, where a superb temple was erected to its honour, where officiating priests without number administered at its sanctuary, and myriads of victims bled upon its altars. Indeed, of all the deified rivers of antiquity, as none were of more vital importance to the devotees, so none were more fervently venerated; and, added to these sacrificial rites, as we are informed by Heliodorus, about the period of the summer solstice when the inundation was at its height, an annual banquet was prepared, replete with all the rich productions of its luxuriant shores, at which the God, with many august ceremonies, was solemnly invited to be present†.

* Plutarch de Iside et Osiride, p. 153.

† Hist. Æthiopic. lib. ix. p. 423, edit. Paris, 1619.

It has been elsewhere observed by me, that Egypt was anciently denominated CHEMIA, in allusion to the *blackness* of its fat and humid soil, the Greek word signifying the *sight of the eye*. The Nile was also called MELAS, *black*; and hence, probably, it has arisen, that all the statues of the Nile, and in particular that fine one at present to be seen in the garden of the Vatican at Rome, are of black marble, emblematical either of the country through which it flowed, or of the colour of the Ethiopians, amidst whose lofty mountains this river has its source. The Nile was sometimes, amid their hieroglyphic delineations, pourtrayed with the head of a *bull*, and at others with the head of a *lion*, symbolical of the sun in those signs; but more generally with the latter hieroglyphic designation, as it was under the stars included in the constellation of the lion that the inundation took place. From the Nile, the most ancient and venerated of rivers, having been thus delineated with the head of a *bull*, it has probably arisen that the epithet *tauriformis* has since, among the poets at least, been generally applied to rivers. Hence the doors of the Egyptian temples were ornamented with sculptured heads of this animal, and with water apparently issuing in torrents from their expanded jaws; a device afterwards frequently copied as an elegant ornament by the architects of Greece and Rome.

I shall not, in this place, enter into further details concerning this celebrated river, as much will occur respecting it under a subsequent head; but one curious circumstance should by no means

be omitted. The Greeks, when, many years afterwards, they took possession of Egypt, never failed in paying due respect to the all-bountiful Nile; but, to demonstrate their reverence for it, as well as for the renowned philosophers who first determined the true length of the solar year, formed a kind of hieroglyphic of the word *Nειλος*, to represent the precise number of the days of which that year consisted, according to the following numerical arrangement :

N	—	—	50
E	—	—	05
I	—	—	10
A	—	—	30
O	—	—	70
Σ	—	—	200
<hr/>			365 (days).

The apposite remark of Cicero, that the Egyptians consecrated no beast, from which they did not derive some advantage*, was never better exemplified than in the general devotion paid to the

ICHNEUMON.

Diminutive in size, uncouth in form, and ranking naturally among the most degraded class of reptiles, as did this ferret-like animal, by

* *Ægyptii nullam belluam, nisi ob aliquam utilitatem quam ex ea caperent, consecrarunt, velut Ibis.*—*De Nat. Deor.* lib. i.

naturalists denominated the **RAT OF PHARAOH**, still was it honoured with profound and universal reverence*, because with implacable hatred this sagacious little creature instinctively pursues the huge crocodile, and with unceasing vigilance finds out and demolishes its eggs, without which, the same author adds, that species of dangerous animal would become so numerous, that the Nile would be no longer navigable. In respect to the well-known story of its watching the opportunity, while the crocodile is asleep, basking in the sun with his mouth wide open, to creep down his throat, and gnaw his way out through his intestines, however strongly asserted, it is wholly incredible; but that they will dare to seize the most formidable of the species in that situation by the throat, and strangle him, is a fact well attested by modern travellers, and may have given birth to the former fable. The Ichneumon was, in a more particular manner, worshipped at Heracleopolis, or the city of Hercules, in Upper Egypt. As the name of this city, like Heliopolis and Crocodilopolis, is evidently Greek, I must here, once for all, remark, that, though the Egyptian cities are now known to us principally by their Greek appellations, yet that those appellations were in general translations of, or at least were of the same import with, the Coptic original. The same analogy will, for the most part, be found to exist in respect to the names of the Egyptian gods and

* *Ælian*, lib. viii. cap. 25, p. 546, edit. 12mo. 1616.

heroes, whose mythological history the artful Greeks, with some mutilation and additions, adopted into their own.

SCARABÆUS.

One of the most venerated and universal of the sacred symbols of Egypt, conspicuous amid all their hieroglyphics, and decorating a thousand gems in the cabinets of Europe, was the SCARABÆUS, or BEETLE; for, these animals, according to Plutarch*, casting the seed of generation into round balls of dung, as a genial nidus to mature it, and rolling them backward with their hinder feet, while they themselves look directly forward, are considered as proper symbols of the sun, who, during the period of his retrogradation, seems to proceed through the heavens in a direction contrary to the order of the signs: or, according to another statement, supplied by Porphyry, and expressed in more astronomical language, these animals were accustomed to roll up their eggs in little round pellets of earth, which they turn towards the *west*, while they themselves continue creeping on towards the *east*; by the first of these motions exhibiting the *diurnal*; by the second, the *annual* motion of the sun and planets†.

This minute attention by the astronomical priests of Egypt to the actions of so insignificant an insect as the beetle, and the philosophical illustration deduced from it, would appear incredible to

* Plutarch de Iside, p. 102.

† Long's Astronomy, vol. i. p. 180.

us, did not the hieroglyphic delineations on the walls of their most venerated temples attest the fact. "At Ombos, (says Mr. Hamilton,) were worshipped the crocodile and the Sun ; or, more properly speaking, the Sun under the mysterious emblems of the crocodile and the beetle. This latter animal, *with the ball or circle within its claws*, is frequently represented on the most conspicuous parts of the building, and the former is generally seen *couchant* on an altar or table, receiving the adorations and offerings of his votaries*." In one particular instance, this insect was considered by them as a marked emblem of their great solar deity, since the scarabæus, during the summer half-year, continues to range at large the bright expanse of heaven, but during the six months of winter retreats to obscure subterraneous recesses ; in this respect strikingly resembling that orb which passes six months in the superior, and as many in the inferior, hemisphere. How highly important, indeed, in the Egyptian mythology was the scarabæus, is evident from their exalting it to the honours of the zodiac, where this animal occupies the place of Cancer, as may be observed by an inspection of M. Denon's and Major Hayes's delineations of that at Dendera.

Horus-Apollo has given us an account of three sorts of Scarabæi cultivated in Egypt, one resplendent with golden wings, when the sun-beams played upon it, *veluti radiis insignita*, a brighter

* Hamilton's *Ægyptiaca*, p. 77.

species of cantharides, and therefore in a peculiar manner sacred to that luminary* ; the second, was *monoceros*, or *one horned* ; and the third was the proper horn-beetle of naturalists, whose *two horns*, which it opens and shuts like pincers, could not fail of securing it, like the sacred Theban adder above noticed, a high degree of veneration, as symbolical of the moon and the zodiacal bull.

Respecting the Scarabæus, there is still another circumstance which highly increased the reverence paid to it. The ancient doctrine, inculcated by nearly all the eastern mythologies, of the deity being both *male* and *female*, to mark more strongly his productive energy, has been already noticed ; and, as they ascribed both sexes to the Scarabæus, this insect was considered as a striking emblem of that mystic union of the two natures in deity.

Among the symbolical animals of Egypt, the

CAT, or ÆLURUS,

was in a most particular manner venerated as well for its hostility to vermin of every kind as for a curious astronomical reason unfolded to us by Plutarch.—The cat was a symbol of the moon in Egypt, not only on account of her brindled coat, resembling the spots in her disk, and as being most active in the night ; but that philosophic race also conceived that the contraction and dilatation of the pupil of the **EYE** of that animal afforded a just emblem of the increase and decrease of her changeful orb.

* Horus-Apollo, Hieroglyphic x. p. 12, edit. 12mo. 1631.

Another motive for their extreme veneration of the cat, was the fecundity of that animal, and the peculiar circumstances attendant on that fecundity, which, *according to them*, rendered it in a still higher degree a significant emblem of the moon. I say, *according to them*—for, in regard to the *truth or falsehood* of these statements, throughout this extended dissertation, extravagant as some of them may seem, I am in no respect answerable; I have only to report them accurately, as I find them recorded in Plutarch, Ælian, Pliny, and other antient writers on natural history. The female of this species, says Plutarch, as the Egyptians affirm, at first brings forth *one* at a birth, then *two*, afterwards *three*, and thus proceeds, adding one to each former birth, till the number amounts to *seven*; so that she brings forth *twenty-eight* in all, corresponding to the number of the days that complete the lunär revolution*.

The cat was daintily fed on fishes, purposely preserved in sacred lakes, and worshipped with peculiar honours at Bubastis, a city situated on the Pelusiac branch of the Nile, and where, at a certain season of the year, the people from all parts of Egypt assembled at a grand annual celebration of the rites of Isis, under the name of Bubastis, sometimes transferred to her feline symbol. The multitude accustomed to congregate on this grand festive occasion, according to Herodotus, amounted to 700,000 people of both sexes, who spent their time in dancing, singing, and every species

* Plutarch de Isid. et Osirid. p. 87.

of voluptuous pleasure. To this pomp Ovid alludes in the following lines, too much connected with the subjects of these strictures to be passed unnoticed :

— cum quo latrator ANUBIS,
Sanctaque BUBASTIS, variisque coloribus APIS,
Quique premit vocem, digitoque silentia suadet*,
Sistraque erant: nunquamque satis quæsusitus OSIRIS,
Plenaque somniferi SERPENS peregrina veneni.

Ovid. Metam. lib. ix. v. 687.

Bubastis was analogous to the Diana of the Greeks; she properly signified the NEW MOON, aptly typified by the *crescent* that uniformly decorates her head†; and no festivals were observed with greater pomp and splendour, by all antiquity, than those of the NEOMENIA. Evident vestiges of these ancient festivals, and especially of this of Bubastis, we are told by a modern traveller, are to be found, in the great fairs annually held in Egypt at the present day, and near the same spot, now called Bastia‡. It was death to kill one of these animals; and a remarkable instance is given by Diodorus, of which he himself was an eye-witness, of that doom being never reversed; a Roman soldier having accidentally killed one, at the very crisis when the Egyptians were anxiously

* Harpocrates, the god of silence, the same with Horus, and therefore not particularly specified in the above enumeration of Egyptian deities.

† Jablonski, Panth. tom. ii. p. 57.

‡ Savary's Travels in Egypt, vol. i. p. 282.

courting the friendship and alliance of the Roman people, the enraged populace, in spite of every remonstrance from Ptolemy and the officers sent to restrain their fury, put the criminal to instant death.

This was their most *frequented* festival; but there was another of equal celebrity, alluded to in those words of the Latin poet just cited, *nunquamque satis quæsitus Osiris*, extremely important to be here explained, on account of its astronomical allusion. It was annually holden at Sais, accompanied with that singular ceremony, the *lighting of lamps*, which on the particular night of its celebration was customary not there only, but through all Egypt. It was observed in remembrance of Isis exploring by moonlight the *lost Osiris*; she is therefore often depicted among the hieroglyphics with a lamp in her hand. Herodotus has these words relative to it—Such of the Egyptians as do not attend the ceremony, think themselves obliged to observe the evening of the festival, and in like manner burn lamps before their houses: thus, on this night, not Sais only, but all Egypt is illuminated*. The whole of this legend rests upon an astronomical foundation, and is best explained by the time of the year when it was holden, viz. on the first full moon after the summer solstice, when the sun was declining towards the southern signs, and the length of the day, in other words, the light of Osiris, was gradually diminishing in the

* Herodotus, lib. ii. cap. 62.

northern hemisphere*. The lamentations in Syria for Adonis slain by a *boar*, the month so called, the counterpart of this Egyptian legend, took place about the same period of the year; and the learned Selden has, I conceive, unanswerably proved the festival celebrated in Judea also about the same period, and in which the Hebrew women are represented as *weeping for Thammuz*, et ecce sedebant ibi mulieres plangentes Adonidem, to have had the same origin†.

Next to the feline deity Ælurus, the
DOG, or ANUBIS,

was most extensively worshipped, a worship of the highest national importance; and in such profound respect was this animal holden, that, in any house where one of this species died, the whole family bemoaned the event as the deepest calamity that could befall them, and went into mourning as for the nearest and dearest relative. Jablonski takes Anubis for the *horizon* itself, but he was only the most conspicuous star on the verge of that horizon during a short space of the year‡. *Sothis* was the proper Egyptian name of the constellation, which was peculiarly sacred

* Achilles Tatius ad Arat. Phænom. p. 146.

† Selden de Diis Syris, p. 351, edit. Elzevir, 1629. It is rather a singular circumstance, that the fourth month of the Jews, on account of the feast dedicated to this idol, was called THAMMUZ.

‡ Jablonski, article Anubis, p. 25.

to Isis, whence that ancient inscription on her statue at Sais, **IT IS I THAT RISE IN THE CONSTELLATION OF THE DOG.** Anubis was principally worshipped at Cynopolis, the city of the dog, the perpetual quarrels of whose inhabitants with those of Oxyrinchus, who worshipped the PIKE, according to Plutarch, required the whole authority of the Roman governors to terminate*.

This constellated Egyptian deity is denominated, by Virgil, **LA-TRATOR ANUBIS**, because, as Servius on that text expresses himself, *canino capite pingebatur*†; and Apuleius more fully describes him in the following passage: “*Nunc atrâ, nunc aureâ facie; sublimis attollens canis cervices arduas Anubis, læva caduceum gerens, dextrâ pulmam virentem quatiens‡.*” He is painted with a face sometimes of a sable, and at others of a golden colour—(to mark the two hemispheres, the *superior* and *inferior*, over which he presides). He exalts on high his large *dog's head*, in his left hand carrying a caduceus (the wand entwined with serpents), and in his right brandishing a green branch of the palm-tree§—a tree, it will be recollected, peculiarly abundant in Egypt, and therefore often used symbolically for the country itself.

The celebrity attached to the worship of the cynocephalus, or

* Plutarch de Iside et Osiride, p. 180.

† Servius in Æneid, lib. viii. v. 698.

‡ Apuleii Metamorph. lib. xi. p. 262, edit. Bipont, 1788.

§ See the engraving of HERMES ANUBIS, in plate 1 of this Appendix.

dog's head numen, in Egypt, as well as the importance of the astronomical symbol itself, may be conjectured from the innumerable images, adorned with the head of this animal, which cover the sculptured monuments of Egypt, and load the cabinet of the modern virtuoso. Mr. Bruce notices having seen numerous resembling symbols in Æthiopia, exalted on columns scientifically placed to face the cardinal points, and evidently raised for astronomical purposes. He found, also, at Axum, colossal statues of Sirius, the latrator anubis*, at whose supposed barking, but actual rising, the Nile poured forth on gladdened Egypt its fertilizing inundation. It may be useful to the reader, for his better understanding of many passages in the preceding and subsequent pages, to be informed, that the precise period of that important event is stated by Pliny in the following passage—“Ardentissimo æstatis tempore exoritur Caniculæ sidus, sole primam partem Leonis ingredientे; qui dies 15 ante Augustas Calendas est†.” In the hottest period of summer the constellation of the dog *rises heliacally* fifteen days before the calends of August, or on the 18th day of July.

Another incontestible proof of the great reverence of the Egyptians for the dog, and which ought by no means to be omitted in these pages, is afforded by what is recorded in Clemens, who, speaking of the pomp of Isis, states that two golden dogs and a golden hawk, and Ibis, (in fact, their *four primary deities*) were

* Bruce's Travels, vol. iii. p. 128.

† Plinii Nat. Hist. lib. ii. cap. 47.

wont to be carried foremost among the sacred images borne in that splendid procession*. The dogs were two in number, in allusion to both hemispheres; and they were formed of *gold*, as being not only the purest and noblest of metals, but gold, it will be recollected, was also the chemical symbol among their physical priests of the solar orb. For this reason the image of the god Apis was also fabricated of gold, and hence originated the golden calf worshipped by the Israelites; not the *living animal*, but the golden symbol, which they had been accustomed to behold, and often perhaps adore in Egypt. Pliny, too, acquaints us, that a *golden cat* was worshipped by the inhabitants of Rhadata in that land of idols†.

The brightness of his piercing eye, that braved the full splendours of the meridian sun, and the vigour of his soaring pinion, that bore him aloft through the regions of unbounded space, rendered the

HAWK

what Horus-Apollo‡ depicts him, a peculiarly expressive symbol of Osiris, who, we have observed, is generally pourtrayed with the head of this venerated bird. Osiris was in a more particular manner adored under this emblem at Philæ, in whose superb temple his remains were deposited, and on the walls of which Mr. Hamilton

* Clemens Alexand. Stromata, lib. v. p. 567.

† Nat. Hist. lib. xvi. cap. 29.

‡ Hieroglyphica, p. 60.

saw a large representation of this bird*. Pococke also observed a cage of red granite in the same temple, six feet high, and three and a half broad, in which he thinks the living bird was cherished.

A striking proof, indeed, if any, in addition to those already brought, were wanted, that the supreme deity *was* venerated in the form of a hawk, may be adduced in that memorable inscription of the temple of Sais, recorded by Plutarch, and which will be discussed more at length hereafter, that the third hieroglyphic in it, intended decisively to mark the supreme deity, is the portrait of that bird. The first was a *child*, signifying entrance into life; the second an *old man*, departure from it; the third a *hawk, God*; the fourth a *fish*, hatred; the fifth a *hippopotamos*, injustice; or, “*Youth and Age take notice, that God abhors injustice.*” In the Flaminian obelisk, too, engraved in Kircher’s curious, though not always authentic, work, the all-ruling Osiris is represented as presiding over the twelve divisions of the sphere, by twelve genii in the form of *twelve hawks*†.

Whatever other excellent qualities the hawk might possess in the opinion of the Egyptians, it was, doubtless, its fine, large, and penetrating eye, with which it observes objects at so vast a distance, and which it can dilate or contract, and shade or unveil, at pleasure, that rendered it so particularly venerated by a people,

* *Ægyptiaca*, p. 49.

† Kircher’s *OEdipus Ægyptiacus*, *Syntagma 3*, cap. ii. p. 218.

who drew their principal auguries from this conspicuous organ of the animal frame, and who, in fact, as we have seen, represented the deity himself by the symbol of an EYE and a SCEPTRE. The wing, too, of this bird, the emblem of spirit and intellect, was universally introduced among their sacred hieroglyphics. We see it adorning the front of their most majestic temples, as well as veiling the heads of their most venerated deities and heroes ; and from that circumstance, probably, Egypt is called in scripture *the land shadowing with wings.* I need not dwell longer on this well-known symbol. Let us attend the altar of the king of birds, as in other countries he was denominated ; but who in Egypt ranks in dignity only in the second class of the feathered tribe.

In this extensive retrospect towards the most ancient system of mythology, and the history of the country where it was first invented, it becomes necessary to inform the reader, that the

EAGLE,

in whose talons was suspended the thunder of the Grecian Jove, was first consecrated to a more ancient Jupiter in the Ammonian temple of the great Diospolis ; and that another very ancient and venerated symbol in that mythology, the owl, of which I shall have occasion to discourse more at large hereafter, was as devoutly cherished in the temple of the Egyptian Isis at Sais, as it was afterwards in that of the Athenian Minerva ; exhibiting fresh proofs of the connection already hinted at in theological matters between the Egyptian and Greek nations. An attentive exami-

nation of the characters of the two great deities of Greece and Egypt, will serve best to explain their respective symbols. Jupiter, the sovereign energy, is only another name for Osiris ; and the eagle is dedicated to him for nearly the same qualities as the hawk is to Osiris. His eye, darting fire like the hawk's, and his still more vigorous strength of wing, exalted him to honours only inferior to those of that bird; for the hawk was the representative of the divinity himself; the eagle was only an attendant in his train; and he probably descended to mingle with the Thebaic deities from the elevated regions of *Æthiopia*, where he delights to build his eyrie amid the loftiest rocks, and brave the rigours of that region of eternal storm.

In fact, the worship of Jupiter Ammon himself by the Egyptians seems to have originated in *Æthiopia*; for, according to Pliny, that deity had a temple at *Meroe**¹, its ancient metropolis, and the inhabitants of *Thebais* were accustomed to observe an annual festival, during which his shrine was carried in solemn procession from *Thebes* to the confines of *Æthiopia*, and back again to that city. This procession lasted twelve days, an evident allusion to the progress of the sun through the twelve signs; and he was carried in a kind of boat, the usual vehicle, as we shall see hereafter, of the higher order of Egyptian deities. At *Meroe*, Herodotus in-

* *Plinii, Nat. Hist. lib. vii. cap. 29.*

forms us*, a great feast was annually celebrated, at which the gods came to banquet at the HELIOTRAPEZE, or *table of the sun*, at which, we are assured by Homer, in the following passage, that Jupiter also occasionally left the skies to assist.

The sire of gods and all th' ætherial train,
 On the warm limits of the farthest main,
 Now mix with mortals, nor disdain to grace
 The feasts of Æthiopia's blameless race:
 Twelve days the powers indulge the genial rite,
 Returning with the twelfth revolving light.

Iliad, lib. i. v.

This table of the sun is described as comprising every species of delicate viands, miraculously produced.

Researches into that more ancient mythology above alluded to, a mythology many centuries older than that of Greece, enables me to state a fact in regard to Egypt, hitherto very little attended to by my precursors in this wide historical field, viz. that the Nile itself, impetuously rushing down in an immense inundation from Æthiopia, and covering, as it were, the whole of Lower Egypt with its wide-expanded watery pinions, was anciently denominated *Aëros*, the EAGLE†. The same mythology, also, records an older Prometheus, as king of Lower Egypt, who tried in vain to check

* Herodotus, lib. iii. cap. 17.

† Consult, for this curious fact, collected from ancient Egyptian records, Diod. Sic. lib. i. p. 17, edit. Rhodom. Q 2

the overflowings of this mighty flood, whose ravages so widely desolated his country, and whose terrors for the catastrophe were the true *eagle*, or *vulture*, that preyed upon the liver of that prince, till the *Egyptian Hercules* checked its destructive progress, and pierced with an arrow the allegorical bird; that is, by vast dykes and mounds he confined its waters within a regular channel*. The whole of this history is found recorded on the ancient sphere of the sons of Mizraim, formed many ages before Eudoxus, the Cnidian, from the Egyptian, composed that of the Greeks, viz. in the year before Christ 360, on which the eagle, the arrow, and Hercules, who has just discharged that arrow at the falling eagle, may be distinctly traced. However artfully the Greeks, in their eagerness to be thought the inventors of the sphere, in after ages adapted to their own mythologic system the fables of their Asiatic and Egyptian masters in astronomical science, as they glaringly did in this instance with respect to Prometheus and his eagle, or vulture, yet the date of the formation of the former sphere, as old as Jacob perhaps, and his *sidereal ladder* with its *seven gates*, proves the fallacy of their pretensions in the present case; for the Aquila, Sagitta, and Hercules, are among the old forty-eight constellations which Thales, or Hipparchus, brought from Egypt into Greece, and which have been handed down to us by the zeal and industry of Ptolemy. Situated, indeed, so near the zodiacal aste-

* Ibid. Diod. Sic. lib. i. p. 18.

risms, and containing itself one very resplendent star, called *Lucida Aquilæ*, conspicuous on the neck of the bird, the eagle, flying in the expanse of heaven, could not fail of attracting the early notice of the Egyptian husbandman. That the Greek agriculturists also honoured it with particular notice, is evident from the subjoined passage in one of the chorusses of Euripides.

The stars of night, receding, quit the skies,
 The rising PLEIADS mark the approach of day;*
 High in mid heav'n the soaring EAGLE flies,
 And æther kindles with the crimson ray.

Euripid. Rhesus, line 574, edit. Musgrave.

The Mazaroth, or circle of the zodiac, it will be remembered, is mentioned in the book of Job: the star Lucifer, in Isaiah.

Equally, as the eagle, a native of the inaccessible cliff, and, like that bird, also rejoicing in the solitude of the desert, the rapacious

VULTURE,

on account of its instinctive propensity to devour vermin and carrion of every kind, received the homage of the wary Egyptian. On the barren tracts near the pyramids, and amid the wide expanse of the Lybian waste, they are said at this day to herd in flocks, invited thither by the abundant offal and excremental spoil, to be found in the suburbs of the great city of Cairo, or the wreck of caravans, perishing by the assault of famine and the pestilential

* The scholiast will best explain this. “ Tum enim vernum tempus. *Vergiliis* enim mane surgentibus, Aquila cœli media tenet, quod fit sole in *Tauro* existente.”

southern blast*. But for the aid of these and other birds of prey, in effectually clearing away the putrid remains of animals and other offensive matter, constantly accumulating, under that torrid sky, the great cities of Egypt would never have been free from contagion; and, therefore, these disgusting birds, as well as *kites*, a kindred predatory race, were prudently consecrated to that religious homage, which could alone preserve them from destruction.

The wing of the vulture is observed, like that of the hawk, frequently to occur among the hieroglyphics, embracing or shadowing the sacred objects of their superstition, conformably to my former remark, that by *wings* in Egypt were typified *intellect, spirit, immortality*, itself. The symbol was, in after ages, like many others, properly of Egyptian origin, adopted by the Greeks, who represented their **PSYCHE** adorned with the tender wings of the *butterfly*, of which a thousand images may be seen in the learned work of Montfaucon.

The very same reasons that in Holland diffused through all ranks a veneration for that noble aquatic bird, the

STORK,

viz. the everlasting war which it wages against the whole tribe of reptiles, insects, and vermin, to be found on the fenny shores of large rivers, and in all marshy situations, operated towards its attainment of almost divine honours in Egypt. About the period

* Shaw's Travels in the Levant, vol. ii. p. 449.

of the retreat of the waters of the Nile, generally, according to Belon, in October, they instinctively arrive, an innumerable host! on the plains of Egypt; to banquet on the reptiles, serpents, and small fish, generated in the deep and spacious mud left by the retiring river. Welcome and benignant to the sons of Mizraim, they remain in Egypt all the succeeding winter; and when the inundation is renewed in the following year, they again take their flight to the inviting plains of Greece and Europe. From the most ancient times, too, they have been known and venerated throughout Asia; and Le Bruyn observed a *stork's nest* carved on the ruins of Persepolis. The Egyptians, also, esteemed them for their moral qualities, their conjugal fidelity, and paternal affection; and whereas, according to Ælian*, they abhorred SWINE, as the remorseless devourers of their own young, they venerated the stork for its piety in nourishing its aged parents†. Pliny, also, affirms the same thing of them: *Geneticum senectam invicem alunt‡.* Whatever truth there may be in these statements, possibly somewhat exaggerated, there can be no doubt of one fact: of their being highly valued by them on account of their destroying those swarms of locusts that infested the banks of the Nile, and spread desolation over the richest pastures of Egypt.

* Ælian, lib. iii. cap. xxiii. p. 160.

† Ibid, p. 710.

‡ Plinii Nat. Hist. lib. x. cap. xxxi.

Partly from the same motives, but performing by night what the preceding predators effected by day, the bird that reigns supreme amid the silence of the nocturnal gloom; the bird, not less sacred to Isis, at Sais, than to Minerva, at Athens; the solitary

OWL

was loaded in Egypt with very distinguished honours. Shrinking from the splendour of the solar blaze, the delicately formed organs of vision in these birds repose with delight on the mild beam of the twilight, and on the silver radiance of that moon, of which they are at once the symbol and the attendant. It is then that they issue forth from the dark abode of the cavern, or descend from the deserted tower on some lonely mountain, to make war upon the reptiles, the mice with which, as a second plague, Egypt was inundated, and the serpents, the lizards, the toads, that constitute its principal food. Addicted as were the Egyptians to consider external circumstances in the objects of their worship, in this bird the motley *plumage*, consisting of black, white, and yellow feathers; the *eye* contracted by day, and enlarged by night, to gaze with rapture on the full-orbed moon; and its *horns*, formed by two tufts of feathers that rise more than two inches upon its crown*, were by no means the least impressive causes of the veneration paid to this favourite bird of Isis.

* See the account and portrait of the great horned owl, sent to Dr. Mead from ATHENS, in Edwards's Gleanings, vol. i. p. 38.

When Cecrops emigrated from Sais, of which he was a native, with his Egyptian colony, to Athens, he carried thither the worship of the Egyptian Minerva, and with it also the veneration of her symbolic bird, the owl. It has already been observed, that by Netha the Egyptians meant the supreme wisdom, and in that sense doubtless was the Grecian goddess, called *Aθηνα* from Netha, conceived of by the wiser part of the Greeks. Indeed, the allegorical birth assigned to her in their mythology, her being produced from the brain of Jupiter, proves the fact of her intellectual origin. Cicero has given her genuine pedigree, when, enumerating the five goddesses that bore the name of Minerva, he says, *Secunda orta NILO, quam Egyptii SAITÆ colunt**.

In closing this retrospect upon the feathered tribes that annually visit the Egyptian shore, we ought not to omit one of great importance as well as beauty, and universally venerated on the African continent. Inhabiting solely the burning tropical regions, and traversing the vast marshes which the overflowing of the great rivers in those latitudes occasions, this majestic race of birds, from the crimson colour of its wings, denominated

PHŒNICOPTERUS,

is expressly said by Heliodorus, at certain seasons of the year, to frequent, in vast numbers, the banks of the Nile, for the same

* De Natura Deorum, lib. iii. cap. 192.

† Hist. Æthiopic. lib. vi. p. 143.

purpose as the ibis and the stork, which they somewhat resemble in form, viz. to prey upon the myriads of aquatic reptiles and insects that breed in the slime left by the inundation. Into the depth of that mud they thrust their long bill, bent into the form of a spoon, while the indented margin of that bill serves, like teeth, to hold fast and to penetrate the slippery prey.

The regions to which this resplendent bird, the Flamingo of the West Indies, migrates, while Egypt is inundated, are wide and various; but are all situated in warm southern latitudes. Familiar with the tropical regions of both continents, they traverse in battalia the vast Atlantic, and, alighting on the shores of Cuba, Jamaica, and St. Domingo, appear to the inhabitants of those islands like an army of soldiers drawn up in martial array. Their splendid plumage, as well as their utility, could not avoid, in a peculiar manner, attaching to them the Egyptians, who held them in reverence little short of adoration.

The *phœnicopterus*, however, was not only venerated on the banks of the Nile; a superstitious regard, as we before intimated, was also paid to it throughout Africa, from the shores of the Mediterranean to the Cape of Good Hope, where they are very common, passing the day on the sides of the lakes and rivers, and at night retiring to the mountains. Buffon, quoting a book of French travels, informs us, that at Angola, Congo, and Bassao, the negroes, from a superstitious respect, will not suffer one of them to be hurt, and that they live undisturbed in the midst of their dwel-

lings: he adds, that some French, having killed several of them, were obliged to conceal them under the long grass, lest the negroes should be prompted to revenge the death of a bird so revered*.

Although the animal to be next mentioned was not very abundant in Egypt, and not much bigger in that country, according to Herodotus†, than the fox, to which it has some relation, yet was the ferocious

WOLF, or HYÆNA,

in a particular manner, adored at Lycopolis, the modern Manfalouth. Diodorus tells us, that it was thus worshipped from motives of gratitude; for, that when the Æthiopians invaded Egypt, they were driven back to Elephantine, on the borders of that country, by *wolves**—probably by chieftains having a wolf for their *standard* or *banner*, for that seems the most rational interpretation of the passage. These banners, on which the symbolic deity, whom the people worshipped in the various districts of Egypt, was pourtrayed, seem to have been of very ancient usage both in that country and over all the east. They were solemnly borne by the officiating priests amid the pomp of the Isiac processions, and in their military excursions served at once as a rallying point, and to inspire an enthusiastic ardour into the minds of those who combated under them. We have seen, in the former part of this work,

* Buffon's Nat. Hist. vol. viii. p. 436.

† Herodotus, lib. ii. cap. 67.

that a **DOVE** was the symbol painted on the Assyrian standard, a fact corroborated by scripture itself, though not very apparent in the translation; since the word, which in the original signifies a *dove* or *pigeon*, is rendered the *oppressor*: *fugite a facie gladii columbae*, fly from the sword of the destroying *dove*, Jeremiah xlviij. 20. It is most probable, however, that as Egypt was so deficient in woods and forests, amid whose deep shades the ravening wolf delights to take up his abode, the earthly animal was principally revered as a type of the *celestial wolf*, so conspicuously beaming in the northern sky, and one of the forty-eight constellations that decorated the ancient Egyptian sphere.

It may with reason be supposed, that every one of the thirty-six *Nomes* into which Egypt was anciently divided, as well as all the great cities, had standards of this kind, on which the animals adored within their precincts were blazoned. The Hebrews, whose antiquities, we have seen, in many instances throw so much light upon those of Egypt—the Hebrews, who were such ardent admirers and close imitators, as far as they dared, of Egyptian rites and manners, religious and civil—when they fled from that country, and encamped in the desert of Sinai, used these *vexilla*, doubtless in imitation of their late masters, and though we may not wholly coincide in opinion with Kircher and the ingenious and learned Sir

* Diod. Sic. lib. i. p. 88.

W. Drummond, in their being precisely the signs of the zodiac*, yet from the many astronomical symbols occurring in their ritual, and among the ornaments of their temple at Jerusalem—symbols acknowledged by the writers of their own nation to have had an astronomical reference—we are naturally led to consider them as the remains of Egyptian superstition.

In proof of what has been just intimated, may be adduced the authority of their first and most famous historian, Josephus, who decidedly asserts, that by the golden candlestick and its *seven* branches, were typified the *seven* planets†; while the Chaldee paraphrast asserts, that the twelve precious stones on the breast-plate of the high priest were emblematical of the twelve zodiacal asterisms. At all events, it is evident, from the following verse in Numbers, that the Hebrews had *standards*: “Every man of the children of Israel shall pitch by his own *standard*, with the *ensign* of their father’s house,” Numbers chap. i. v. 2. With respect to the emblematical figures on these standards having any direct relation to the zodiacal asterisms, that still remains a very disputable point, notwithstanding the fact is expressly asserted by Aben Ezra, in regard to those of the four principal divisions of the army, which, he ac-

* See that gentleman’s dissertation on the 49th chapter of Genesis, in the sixth number of the Classical Journal, of which we must admire the acuteness and erudition, though it is impossible to assent to all his conclusions.

† See Josephi Antiq. Judaic. lib. iii. cap. vii. sect. 7.

quaints us, had depicted upon them the signs Aquarius, Taurus, Leo, and Scorpius, afterwards, if Kircher's rabbinical authorities may be credited, exchanged for the eagle, which has been above observed to be not far removed from the zodiacal circle*. Could such a connection between those figures and the asterisms be admitted, the system would derive no mean support from the circumstance of the wolf being the peculiar symbolical designation of the tribe of Benjamin. *Benjamin shall ravin as a WOLF; in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil,* Gen. xlix. 27.

Quitting, however, these astronomical speculations, and returning to the page of natural history, we may remark, that there is so great a resemblance in many particulars between the wolf and the HYÆNA, as, for instance, in its size, its craftiness, and ferocity, that we must not wonder at these animals having been often confounded by travellers in Africa; and from the circumstance of their abounding so much, as they are said to do, in the interior regions of that vast continent, instead of the Egyptian wolves driving back the Æthiopian invaders, we should think the reverse of the story more likely to be true, and that the Æthiopian wolves or hyænas had assaulted and vanquished the inhabitants of Thebais. According both to Ludolphus and Bruce, the latter are to be found in vast multitudes, and of the utmost ferocity, in that mountainous coun-

* Consult Kircher and the authorities adduced by him for these facts in *Œdip. Ægypt.* vol. i. p. 97.

try. Bruce, in particular, describes them as infesting the streets and squares of Gondar, “from the time of its becoming dark till the dawn of day, seeking the mangled fragments of slaughtered carcases, which this cruel and unclean people expose in the streets without burial*.” Ludolphus, the Abyssinian, also describes the hyænas of that country as of a larger size than usual ; extremely bold and rapacious, they sometimes attack man himself, and rush with fury upon cattle of all kinds. Disappointed of *living* prey, they fly to the repositories of the *dead*, and tearing up the ground with their feet, and filling the air with their dreadful yells, with savage joy they banquet on the carcases their rage has disinterred†. For the purpose of clearing Egypt of the infectious remains of the slaughter-house and the field of battle, after the fierce and often sanguinary contests of conflicting Nomes, fighting in the cause of their respective deities, no animals could have been selected more proper for that species of consecration which such sorts of creatures received, and intended, as previously intimated, to guard them from that destruction, which, in other countries, generally awaited them from the natural hatred and detestation of mankind.

Allied to the wolf by his rapacious qualities, and the known symbol of *fraud* throughout the world, we see the

* Bruce's Travels, vol. iii. p. 89.

† Ludolphi Æthiopia, cap. x. p. 57, folio edit. 1682.

FOX, or JACKAL,

occurring too frequently amid the hieroglyphics of Egypt, to be passed by unnoticed in this assemblage of predatory animals. The Egyptian fox is generally supposed to resemble very much, if not to be the very same animal as, the JACKAL, and the latter is by naturalists denominated *lupus aureus*, from the golden or yellow colour of his hair. If distinct animals, they both held a high rank among the class of those who were deemed the *purifiers of Egypt* from contagious effluvia; the greedy devourers of the offensive remains of the dead. The wolf solitarily pursues his schemes of spoliation; but the jackals are gregarious, and go in troops to the banquet of blood. They make a hideous yelling during the night, their principal season of action, and at the close of day rush boldly, in quest of plunder, into the streets and squares of Cairo. In what veneration the fox or jackal was anciently holden in Egypt, is evident from this animal being placed high in the centre of their sphere, and, as Mr. Hamilton conjectures, it was probably the original of the Ursa Minor*. The constellation called Ursa Major, is also in that sphere designated by a

CYNOCEPHALUS,

of which singular animal, in consequence, it becomes necessary to say a few words, so far, at least, as his mythological history is concerned.

* Hamilton's *Ægyptiaca*, p. 213.

cerned. The **SIMIA**, or **APE**, is only to be found in warm tropical climates. He is alike known and venerated in the mountains of Africa and the gauts of India. That species under consideration is well described by the term *cynocephalus*, or *with a dog's head*, as exhibited on the monuments of Egypt. Its partial resemblance to their great deity, Anubis, has doubtless been a principal cause of the great veneration paid to this animal in Egypt; but there is another reason, which, however ridiculous it may appear to us, yet, being recorded by so grave an author as Macrobius, ought not to be wholly omitted. The division of the day into twelve hours, he informs us, originated from the *cynocephalus*, having been observed by Hermes Trismegist during the time of the two equinoxes, to *stale twelve times a day*, and constantly at an equal distance of time*. On the basis of this observation was constructed the ancient *clepsydra*, an instrument intended to distinguish the *hours* by the fall or dropping of water. That instrument, therefore, had generally a *cynocephalus* carved on the top of it. Modern travellers in Egypt have, however, discovered that other more important reason, hinted at above, for the homage paid to it, viz. its having been constellated in the most conspicuous portion of their ancient sphere. For what reason is not apparent, but it is the *female* *cynocephalus* that is exalted to this honour. In the Egyptian mythology the *cynocephalus* is consecrated as a

* Macrobius *Saturnalia*, lib. v. p. 164.

symbol of the moon*; that moon, under whose benignant beam he delights to perform his gambols, and make his nocturnal depredations on gardens and vineyards.

Pignorius, also, in his learned essay upon the Mensa Isiaca, points out a cynocephalus with a *lunar crescent* upon his head; an animal, he observes, that rejoices at the moon's rising, and mourns at her setting†. They were a race extremely tractable; for, according to Ælian, during the reign of the Ptolemies, the Egyptians taught the cynocephali to write, dance, play on the flute, and afterwards ask money of the spectators as a reward for their performances‡. Strabo tells us they were worshipped at Hermopolis, and that in the temple of Anubis, at Cynopolis, there were preserved figures of this animal in silver§.

The Indian scholar need not here be informed how largely the ape enters into the mythological arrangements of that country, where in the wars carried on between Ram and Ravan, the tyrant of Lanca, Hanumat, Ram's general, commanded a numerous and intrepid race of those large monkeys denominated by some naturalists *Indian satyrs*, by whose assistance he raised the celebrated bridge of rocks from the continent to Ceylon, called *Ruma's bridge*,

* See a medal in Cuper's Harpocrates, and that learned writer's accompanying explanation of it, in which this symbol is strikingly exemplified, p. 12, quarto edit. 1694.

† Pignorii Mens. Isiac. p. 48.

‡ Ælian, lib. x. cap. 26.

§ Strabo, lib. 17, p. 770, edit. 1649.

and a part of which, according to the fable, yet remains. Might not this army of satyrs, hints Sir W. Jones, have been only a race of mountaineers, whom Rama had civilized? However that might be, the large breed of Indian apes is at this moment held in high veneration by the Hindoos, and fed with devotion by the Brahmins, who, on the banks of the Ganges, have established large institutions for their support*. Thus are we imperceptibly, as it were, brought back to India, whence we set out, and to which the antiquities of Egypt either distantly or immediately, yet constantly, direct our view.

To the mythologists of all ages it has ever appeared unaccountably strange, that an animal, in many respects so odious to the Egyptians as was the

CROCODILE,

the emblem of their abhorred Typhon, should, in any of its cities, have received divine honours; but such was the undoubted fact. According to Herodotus, the inhabitants of the country about Thebes, and in the vicinity of the lake Mæris, honoured the crocodile in a particular manner; while those of Elephantine, and other places, violently abhorred and dreaded them. It was at a city called, from this circumstance, Crocodilopolis, afterwards Arsinoe, that those honours were so particularly paid, where one of those animals, trained up, and rendered docile for the purpose, was che-

* Asiatic Researches, vol. i. p. 257.

rished in a magnificent temple, had his ears adorned with costly gems, and his feet encircled with golden bracelets. While living, it was fed with the choicest food; and, when dead, it was embalmed, deposited in a sacred chest, and interred near the sepulchres of the kings, in the recesses of the labyrinth*.

We must conclude, that this worship, like that of the loathsome serpent, was, in great part, founded on the dread naturally entertained by mankind for those reptiles. The very aspect of the serpent alarms us; the idea of its venom excites horror in the soul. The appearance of the crocodile, with its enormous jaws and huge fangs, is equally terrifying. Yet, amid their physical enquiries, the Egyptians had discovered in them certain properties which induced them to rank even *them* in the number of sacred animals. Those that distinguished the serpent have already been enumerated: but the crocodile, *having no tongue*, as they conceived, was venerated as a symbol of God, for which organ the deity has no occasion; and the female of the species was thought to be, in some degree, endowed with prophetic power, since, by a kind of prescience, she deposited her eggs (sixty in number) for safety precisely at, or rather a small distance *beyond*, the point to which the inundation would rise in that year. In another respect, too, the crocodile, according to Plutarch, was an emblem of the supreme deity, because that creature, by the aid of a pellucid membrane,

* Herodot. lib. ii. cap. 69.

descending from his forehead, was able to see with closed eyes, without being himself seen*.

Again we are informed, by Horus-Apollo, that the crocodile, in the hieroglyphic system of Egypt, denoted the east and the west, which were considered as the **EXTREMITIES** of the sun's course†. In fact, they looked with horror on whatever limited the extent of the cheering beam and influence of their beneficent Osiris; and, as Typhon was his destroyer, they typified the east and west, the boundaries of his course, by the crocodile, his acknowledged symbol. These terrific animals, at present, seldom appear much below Syene. About the scite of the ancient Ombos, twenty-seven miles north of Syene, where also anciently they were so enthusiastically adored, they still collect in considerable herds, and are seen basking amid the sandy isles so frequent in that part of the Nile's course.

OSIRIS ON THE CROCODILE.

In apparent contradiction to all the preceding statements respecting the immortal enmity between Osiris and the crocodile, yet still on many monuments of antiquity do we find these mighty mythological personages united in strict connection, the former as the symbol of the *solar fire*, the latter as the emblem of the *aquatic fluid*. And this circumstance leads to the farther unfolding of that very singular feature in the complicated system of the Egyptian

* Plutarch de Iside, p. 103, ubi supra.

† Horus-Apollo Hieroglyphica, p. 70.

theology, only slightly hinted at in a former page, but stated pretty much at large by Plutarch in the dissertation so often alluded to above.

The Egyptians, says that author, are not accustomed, like the Greeks, to delineate the sun and moon, as drawn about in chariots, but as *sailing in boats*. By this they intended to mark the influence of the solar heat, blended with the aquatic element, in the generation and nourishment of whatever exists. In proof of this doctrine, he cites both Homer and Thales, as teaching that *water was the first principle of all things*, and the cause of generation.*” The scyphus, or boat, in which Osiris sails, is sometimes formed to imitate the calyx of the lotos; while, at others, it assumes the form of the crocodile itself, an animal, which, being of an amphibious nature, exists with equal ease on land and on water. Achilles Tatius, however, cited by Montfaucon, assigns another curious reason for Osiris being thus placed on a boat resembling a crocodile, viz. that his teeth were equal in number to the days of the year; and, as it is the sun that makes this division of the year into 365 days, on *that account* they placed the image of the sun in a boat formed like a crocodile†. The same idea was also expressed, according to Eusebius, *per hominem crocodilo impo-*

* De Iside et Osiride, p. 144.

† See the Supplement to Montfaucon's Antiquity Explained, vol. ii. p. 230.

sitam navem ingredientem, by the symbol of a man entering a boat placed upon a crocodile*.

On consulting Pococke, the reader will find, on his forty-second plate, a delineation of this primary deity, this *governator mundi*, carried in his boat on the shoulders of twelve men, emblematical of the twelve months; and numerous others may be seen in Montfaucon, in which the solar deity, in the form of a *circle*, or in the proper person of Osiris, known to be so by his attributes, is wafted about in a boat shaped like a crocodile, or borne on that animal's back. The boat, thus allegorically formed, is described by Montfaucon, as follows: "The Egyptians placed the image of the sun in a ship which was carried by a crocodile. It had *seven* mariners in it; its prow was adorned with the sculptured similitude of a cat; the mast was decorated with a lion's head; and the external part bore the resemblance of a crocodile†."

In the same manner the planetary orbs, and those of the zodiac, are designated sailing about in boats, both on the Dendera sphere, and the Alexandrian sarcophagus in the British Museum. Hence, doubtless, among the Greeks originated the idea of the *cup of the sun*, in which their Hercules, the self-same sun personified, traversed the boundless ocean, as described by Macrobius: Antiqui narrant Herculem *poculo*, quasi *navigio*, immensa maria transisset‡.

* Eusebii Præp. Evan. lib. iii. cap. ii.

† Montfaucon's Supplement, vol. ii. p. 230.

‡ Macrobiï Saturn. lib. v. cap. xxi.

Notwithstanding, however, what Plutarch has remarked, as Osiris is very generally delineated with a *whip* in his right hand, the idea of a chariot and horses bearing the African Apollo through the vast expanse, could be no stranger to the minds of the Egyptians.

In this discussion one thing is too remarkable to be omitted, which is, that all the three cities, where crocodiles were in particular adored, viz. Coptos, Arsinoe, and Ombos, were situated at some distance inland from the Nile, and watered by canals from that river. Without these canals the inhabitants of those cities must have perished with thirst, and consequently the approach of the crocodiles which announced the overflowing of the Nile, and also the animal itself, was hailed with transport bordering on enthusiasm*. The crocodile, as a symbol of Typhon, was here forgotten: he became the symbol of life and health, and stood to them in the place of Osiris, the benevolent deity. In this manner, probably, may other perplexing difficulties in the Egyptian worship be reconciled, and the cause of the hatred and veneration of the same animals, but in different districts, be explained.

It has been intimated before, in a quotation from Herodotus, that the crocodile, as the Egyptians supposed, *has no tongue*; but Pococke says he has a fleshy substance like a tongue, that is fixed all along the lower jaw, which may serve to turn his food about with†. This circumstance may also serve to convince us that the Egyp-

* Ælian, lib. ii. cap. xxi.

† Pococke, vol. i. p. 102.

tians, in their endeavours to find out the occult properties of animals fit to illustrate their symbolical theology, however in most cases successful, were sometimes deficient in the natural history of the animal selected for this purpose, for it is now agreed among anatomists, that the crocodile has a tongue, though of a diminutive size. The fact, too, asserted by Montfaucon, on the authority of Achilles Tatius, of his having 365 teeth, the number of the days of the year, is as yet unestablished, and is in all probability a considerable exaggeration of the truth, though doubtless his teeth are very numerous and formidable.

Equally astonishing was the worship paid to another animal, by which also Typhon, the evil principle, was symbolized—I mean the

HIPPOPOTAMOS,

or river-horse; under which form that monster is by Eusebius*, citing Porphyry, reported to have torn to pieces the beneficent Osiris. In remembrance of that important fact, we read in Plutarch†, that at Hermopolis, there was exhibited an emblematical statue of Typhon, in the form of a hippopotamus, with a hawk (the symbol of Osiris) upon his back, contending with a huge serpent, the ferocious dragon of the Nile. At the devout homage, however, thus paid the hippopotamus, our astonishment will be

* Eusebius ex Porphyr. in Præp. Evang. lib. iii. cap. 12, p. 116.

† Plutarch de Iside, p. 89.

much mitigated, when what the same author records of this animal shall be duly considered, viz. that when the inhabitants observed, previous to the inundation, these formidable animals appear in considerable numbers on the shore, it was to them a sure sign that there would be an abundant Nile that season. It could only be by long experience that this physical truth could be known to the Egyptian naturalist, upon which account the symbol of terror was turned to momentary rejoicing.

Independent of his representing Typhon, the murderer of Osiris, the hippopotamos, in their hieroglyphic system, was also considered as an emblem of treachery and injustice; as it is his custom, according to *Ælian**, by stealth and in the deep darkness of the night, to invade the fields adjoining the Nile, and make wide devastation among the growing crops of corn. While thus gorging himself, with guarded caution he keeps retiring *backward* to the river, which he thus easily gains, when disturbed. To make some amends, however, for so many obnoxious qualities, if Prosper Alpinus may be credited, the ancient Egyptians learned *phlebotomy* from this gigantic progeny of the Nile; for, when thus over-gorged with food, or otherwise diseased, he seeks out a certain sharp-pointed reed that grows on the banks of the river, and wounds with it a vein in its thigh, which causing a profuse bleeding, the plethora is removed. He is said afterwards to close up

* *Ælian*, lib. v. cap. liii.

the orifice with a plaster of mud*. The genuine character of both this and the preceding monster may be gathered from that remarkable passage of Plutarch, in part cited before, and corroborated by the subsequent one from Clemens.

The emblematical inscription painted upon the vestibule of the Temple of Sais, as we learn from the first of these authors†, was, 1, a child; 2, an old man; 3, a hawk; 4, a fish; 5, a hippopotamos, signifying, according to him, 1, entrance into life; 2, departure from it; 3, God; 4, hatred; 5, injustice. The same circumstance is related by Clemens‡ of Alexandria; but the inscription, instead of being at Sais, according to him, was at Diospolis, and for the hippopotamos he substitutes the crocodile, which he says was the Egyptian symbol for impudence—*impudence*; because, in addition to his other crimes, he informs us, the hippopotamos is asserted by naturalists, first to slay his sire, and afterwards to violate his dam. His interpretation of it is as follows: *All ye who are just come into the world, and all ye who are about quitting it, remember that God hates impudence*; but, surely, if this explanation have in it any basis of truth, the symbol implying INJUSTICE is the more likely to have been that used on this solemn occasion, and exalted in so sacred a place.

After having presented the reader with the above formidable

* Prosp. Alpin. Hist. Nat. Ægypt. lib. iv. cap. xii

† Plutarch de Iside, p. 130.

‡ Clemens Stromata, lib. v. p. 193.

catalogue of *birds* and *beasts*, whose beneficent or noxious qualities and properties alternately excited in the breast of the Egyptians sentiments of affection or terror, and gave birth to a superstition of a complexion equally varied, without taking notice of the inferior objects of their devotion, in whom they had found, or affected to find, qualities worthy of notice—such as the cock and the raven, in most countries sacred to the sun, the otter, the mole, the weasel, and innumerable other reptiles, consecrated in the calendar of Egypt for reasons no longer to be discovered, or very obscurely discernible—I shall proceed to a cursory survey of such objects as were holden sacred by them among the finny tribes that tenanted the Nile; and the produce of the vegetable world.

* * * * *

But here—amid this abyss of degrading superstitions—let us pause for a moment, as **MEN**, and as **CHRISTIANS**, to mark at what an *early* period after the awful event of a destroying deluge, and how *universally*, mankind had apostatized from the exalted purity of the precepts and practice of their great post-diluvian progenitor. From the preceding extended dissertation, and that which is to follow, on the various and multiplied superstitions of Egypt, results the following conclusion: If a nation, so *proverbially wise* throughout antiquity as were the Egyptians, could descend to the baseness of worshipping, under whatever plea, the animals and objects above enumerated, how highly important, how indispensably necessary, was become a **DIVINE REVELATION**, to reclaim from such gross

idolatries a degenerate and apostate world! How naturally are we led to exclaim, Could this be the enlightened race who, as Herodotus informs us, first taught in their schools the sublime dogma of the **IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL?*** How unworthy a conduct to be pursued by a race of men calling themselves philosophers; for with all the palliatives produced above from Plutarch and others, they certainly were guilty of idolatry, and that of the most humiliating kind! Were these the masters of the divine Plato, and that long train of wise and virtuous sages, who taught in the schools of Greece a doctrine so diametrically opposite to this conduct? A chosen few, who had for above 200 years witnessed them in the full vigour of their nefarious practice, and were in too many instances, as their subsequent conduct evinced, infected by their example, were selected to be afterwards the depository of that revelation, and in the succeeding promulgation of it which took place at Sinai, we shall presently see that the abominations in question are as minutely marked out as they are severely anathematized. Having made this admonitory remark, dictated by a sense of duty, and which will be amplified hereafter, I proceed to consider the remaining subjects of this extensive investigation.

* * * * *

That exact attention to health, rendered necessary in a country where the *leprosy* and *ophthalmia* have ever been, and continue to this

* Herodotus, lib. i. sect. 123.

day, the scourge of the inhabitants, compelled the Egyptians to be very scrupulous in the article of *diet*, which, from the heat of the climate, was mostly of a cooling and vegetable kind, and to refrain wholly from the *flesh of swine*. They cultivated the produce of the garden, therefore, with laborious and unremitting attention, and had esculent plants in infinite number and astonishing variety. The Hebrews, traversing the barren and sandy deserts of Arabia and Petraea, are said to have looked back with deep regret and longing eyes towards the country so exuberant in productions of this kind, and repined aloud for the *cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick*, Numbers ii. 5, on which they had lately so luxuriously regaled. Egypt is still remarkable, according to M. Sonnini, the best modern naturalist in this line of research, for the rich abundance of its culinary productions. Speaking of the country about Rosetta, in December, he observes—“ Amid this profusion of animated nature, VEGETATION displays its most splendid treasures. Almost all kinds of fruit are now in a state of maturity. Beside those (the culinary) I have already mentioned, delightful orchards exhibit abundance of oranges, lemons, limes, bergamot lemons, and shaddocks. Who would not exchange the finest of our springs for such a winter?*”

In respect to *swine*, the above cited traveller has well observed, that “ the vast quantity of fat with which the hog is loaded, ob-

* Sonnini's Travels in Egypt, vol. ii. p. 58.

structing the perspiration in climates where the heat produces it so abundantly, renders the Egyptians more liable than elsewhere to complaints, which, under a burning sky, may easily degenerate into a leprosy. Such a disposition as this was more than sufficient to inspire them with detestation for a species of animal, which appeared to be itself liable to the disease, and to induce them to shun every tendency toward any thing that could generate this abominable distemper. This was, in fact, the real cause of an aversion, which the absurd superstition of the Jews has retained in colder countries, where the hog is among the number of animals most useful as a nutriment of man. The Egyptians thought, that being constitutionally subject to the leprosy, to ringworms, and other cutaneous eruptions, which in these parts assume a more decided degree of virulence, it was absolutely requisite to abstain altogether from this sort of food. Abstinence from the flesh of the hog has been transmitted to the present race of Egyptians. The Cophts never eat it, any more than the Mahometans, so that nothing is more scarce in the Said than this animal, at present*. These remarks may serve as a general introduction to what will farther occur concerning their veneration and abhorrence of particular *animals*, *fishes*, and *vegetables*, respecting which the ancients have left us less precise information than concerning the sacred beasts above enumerated. What little can be gleaned on

* Ibid.

this obscure subject shall be stated concisely and in order; for Natural History is not Mythology, though the latter, in various points, is greatly illustrated by the former.

SACRED FISHES.

In the discussion of this subject it may be previously necessary to remark, that all kinds of fish, destitute of scales, were forbidden by the priests to be eaten by the Egyptian people; a race who were, as before observed, so subject to leprous infection, that tremendous

— ELEPHAS morbus; qui propter flumina Nili
Gignitur Aegypto in media.

Lucretius.

With respect to the priests themselves, from fear probably of cutaneous distempers, they absolutely refrained from fish of every kind, either with or without scales. Among the latter may be particularly named the *silurus*, which, however, was nourished in vast reservoirs at Bubastis, and used as food for the sacred cats kept in the adyta there. In illustration of this, M. Sonnini mentions the *silurus* as a coarse kind of fish, resembling the *sturgeon* of European rivers, and “fit only to be eaten by cats*.”

Unrestrained, however, by the superstition in diet of the ancient Egyptians, the modern inhabitants of that country bring in

* Sonnini, vol. ii.

profusion to the markets of Cairo all the rich productions of its luxuriant soil, and all the rare animals that tenant the air, the earth, and the waters of that prolific region. Every kind of fish, M. Sonnini informs us, that the Nile afforded, was to be found there, and he had an opportunity of examining in person as well those anciently deemed sacred, as those in common request among the people. With the former alone have we any concern, and to this author principally must we refer in the investigation of their good or evil qualities.

The fishes particularly deemed *sacred*, and consequently forbidden to be eaten, were in number *four*; the **OXYRINCHUS**, so called from its *pointed snout*; the **LATOS**; the **PHAGER**, and the **LEPIDOTUS**; whose *merits* or *demerits*, whether real or supposed, we shall endeavour successively to discuss. We shall begin our brief inquiry with considering

THE FISH LATOS.

This fish is by many naturalists thought to have been the **PERCH**, *perca Nilotica* of Hasselquist. It was, of all others, the most generally revered; and had a splendid temple at Latopolis, the modern Esnay, the portico of which, engraved in Denon's work, is, in the opinion of that writer, the purest and most perfect fragment of Egyptian antiquity extant*. What, however, must be deemed

* Denon, vol. ii. p. 103.

rather singular, is the circumstance, that no representation of the fish itself is to be found among the innumerable hieroglyphics with which the building is charged. This fish is asserted by Hasselquist, to be the largest of all river perch, and sometimes to weigh more than one hundred pounds. The French, says Pococke, call it the *variole*, because it very much resembles the carp*.

Singular as the circumstance, just mentioned, must appear, viz. that the fish anciently adored at Latopolis does not appear pourtrayed among the symbolic figures that adorn the walls of its superb temple; yet it will be remembered, that Strabo, who is the only author that mentions the prevalence of that worship in this district, also informs us, that they adored Minerva as well as the fish Latos†. By Minerva he must have meant the Neith of the Egyptians, before explained to be Isis, and her image is seen seated on many parts of the building‡, though the fish does not appear. However, we are now in no want of a just description and portrait of the Latos, a modern traveller having, from a comparison of the ancient accounts with his own observations made on the spot, fully exhibited both.

In M. Sonnini's second volume, and in plate 22, may be seen

* Pococke, vol. i. p. 202.

† Strabo, lib. 17.

‡ Pococke, vol. i. p. 111, expressly says, "I saw the figure of a *woman sitting*, cut in several parts of the wall."

what he calls the only accurate drawing of this fish extant, taken by himself from life. Its native appellation is *keshere*, and he observes, “There is every reason to presume, that this fish is the same with that called by the ancient Greeks *Latos*, held sacred in the Egyptian name of *Latopolis*, the inhabitants of which scrupulously abstained from eating it.” He agrees with Pococke in opinion, that it is the *Variole* of the French writers; *Perca Nilotica*, *Arabis keschr*, *Gallis Variole*. The Arabic word *keschr*, he acquaints us, means the *scale of a fish*, and is given to it from the vast number of its scales. It is, when not over large, one of the best fishes of the Nile, and in lower Egypt is looked upon as a great delicacy. As it ascends the Nile it grows much larger, and is sometimes to be found of the weight of three hundred pounds: it is then hard and indigestible, consequently unwholesome, and for that reason he thinks the eating of it was prohibited at *Latopolis*, which was above Thebes, and near the 25th degree of latitude. It is, too, extremely voracious, devouring many other species, and is the principal cause of the small number of fishes to be found in that river in proportion to its size*.

We must not quit *Latopolis*, and its fish-deity, without saying a word or two on a subject which will presently occupy our more extended consideration when we come to discuss the history of the sacred plants of Egypt.

* Sonnini, vol. 2, p. 256.

The neighbourhood of Latopolis was anciently celebrated for the groves of palm-trees and the productive gardens with which it was surrounded, and it is now, according to Savary, shaded by orange groves, and is fertile in flowers and fruits. This circumstance naturally directs our attention to the ornamental decorations of the columns yet remaining, upon whose capitals are beautifully sculptured, the leaves of the Lotos, the palm-tree, and other symbolical plants of Egypt, but principally the palm; proving, as is well observed by Denon, that the Egyptians borrowed nothing of this kind from other people, though the Greeks in succeeding times borrowed largely from them. Mr. Hamilton also remarks, "that he saw one of the capitals enriched with an ornament in the shape of the date-leaf and fruit, the upper part of the shaft appearing to have been cut so as to imitate the trunk of the date-tree, just after its lower branches are lopped off. This close imitation of nature," he judiciously observes, "leads to a fair presumption that the first idea of columnar architecture was taken from the palm or date-tree*." But why the palm-tree was thus particularly honoured, will form a subject of future investigation.

THE FISH OXYRINCHUS.

OXYRINCHUS was the capital of a nome, (anciently so called), and is supposed, by Pococke, to be the present Abu-girge on the Nile, in which supposition this generally judicious writer is less

* *Aegyptiaca*, p. 106.

correct than usual, as undoubtedly Oxyrinchus was situated at some distance from the Nile *inland*, and only refreshed by water brought thither by a canal from that river; the grand canal called Bahr Jousouf, that stupendous monument of human labour, one hundred yards broad, and fifty miles long; and whose stream, when full, rolls on with the majesty of a large river. Strabo says, there was, in Oxyrinchus, a superb temple erected to this piscatory deity, by modern naturalists universally considered to have been the PIKE, of which, at this day*, however, no ruins remain. The desperate contests of the inhabitants with the people of the neighbouring city of Cynopolis, where Anubis, or the dog, was worshipped, have often been the theme of historians, and have been, already mentioned in these pages.

In this discussion our concern is rather with the mythology than the geography of Egypt; but, in respect to the palpable mistake committed by Pococke, above alluded to, in regard to the situation of Oxyrinchus, it is necessary to say a few words in order to prevent others from being misled by his statement. According to Mr. Hamilton, who, during the inundation, navigated a great part of the Oxyrinchian Nome, a miserable ruined town, called Behennesse now occupies the site of a city, once famous for its riches and grandeur. This is occasioned by its situation, far *inland*, on

* See Strabo, lib. xvii. p. 812, and Pococke, vol. i. p. 79.

the borders of that vast and barren Desert, whose encroaching sands, wafted along by the western whirlwinds, are rapidly overwhelming all the towns on that frontier. Beneath those sands the ancient capital probably lies buried, for Mr. Hamilton in vain sought there for any genuine remains of Egyptian grandeur*. In respect to the wonderful canal, alluded to above, and by which the Oxyrinchus arrived at the capital, Mr. H. thinks there is every reason to conclude, "that the Bahr Jusuf is that celebrated canal, by which Herodotus informs us that the waters of the river were conveyed into the lake Mœris, and by which the equilibrium of the inundations was maintained. Its present appellation is derived from the circumstance of its having been repaired by the Sultan Saleh ed-din, who is more commonly known in Egypt by the name of Jusuf." He adds, "that the whole Heptanomis, once the most fertile and beautiful region of Egypt, is now almost entirely uncultivated and abandoned†."

The Oxyrinchus met with the destiny of many other animals; it was venerated in one part of Egypt, while in other parts it was held in the utmost abomination, as indeed, according to Plutarch, were both the phager and lepidotus, these three fish having been guilty of the enormous crime of devouring the *genitals* of Osiris,

* Hamilton's *Ægyptiaca*, p. 301.

* Ibid. p. 13.

when by wicked Typhon separated from the body, and thrown into the Nile ; an expressive, but not very decent, allegory allusive to the unbounded *voracity* of these fish, which rendered the Nile less productive of the food to which a considerable portion of the people at once owed their existence and their support*.

THE FISH PHAGER.

The Phager is by some naturalists supposed to be the famous *red mullet* of the ancients ; others contend that it is the *sea-bream* : others for its being the *Sparus rubescens* of Artedi. However classed, this fish gave its name to a district near the sea, and the Pelusiac mouth of the Nile, whose capital of Phageropolis, according to D'Anville, is obscurely traced in the modern appellative of VACARIA. There, and at Syene, in Upper Egypt, the Phager was particularly venerated, because it was observed by the inhabitants to make its first annual appearance upon their shores about the season of the Nile's beginning to overflow. In other parts of Egypt, however, the red colour of its body and fins, a colour held in abhorrence by the Egyptians, both as to animals and plants, because Typhon was of that complexion, caused it to be equally detested and forbidden to be used as food.

There existed another reason for their abhorrence of this fish ; though it occasionally visited the Nile, it was properly a salt-water fish, and the Egyptians in general abhorred as impure the

* Plutarch de Iside, p. 23.

fish of the Mediterranean: it was that same monster, Typhon, that swallowed up their beloved Nile, and therefore every thing cherished in it was deemed polluted. Hence their rooted objection to sea-salt, although they abundantly used the fossil kind brought to the Egyptian markets from Æthiopia. To Nephtys, the wife of Typhon, was originally applied the fable afterwards usurped by the Greeks in honour of their Venus, that she was produced by the foam of the sea, and under the same impression the whole country of Egypt, near the sea, was denominated Nephtys. In respect to the red complexion imputed to Typhon, Plutarch explains it as being allusive to his fury and adust nature, and hence it arose, that, in the early periods of their empire, persons with red hair were sacrificed to that evil genius, though in its latter æras all human sacrifices whatever were forbidden.

With respect to the actual existence, in remote æras, of that dreadful rite, a fact which has been disputed, the walls of the sepulchral caverns of the Thebais bear too ample testimony to the practice, to admit of the least doubt of the truth of it. In Mr. Hamilton's description of those tombs, that testimony is thus decisively given. "In many other of the tombs are seen processions of captives taken in war, with their hands tied behind them; some of them walking or kneeling. They have been decapitated; and their heads are lying at their feet. Some, whose throats are just cut, leaning over a jar, in which streams of blood are falling from the wounds. By the side of many of these headless bodies are the

executioners, with knives in their hands, and the heads are lying between them and the victims; these last are sometimes of a black colour, and the executioners are red. Other victims are lashed to posts, preparatory to their being beheaded. Nothing could exceed my astonishment on first viewing these representations. I little expected to see, in the sepulchres of kings, and in the seats of death, such unvarnished records of the cruel and bloody character of those who had built them.*”

THE FISH LEPIDOTUS.

The Lepidotus, venerated at Lepidotum, a town situated on the right bank of the Nile, in the Thebais, was another fish deemed sacred, and on that account forbidden to be eaten by the ancient Egyptians. It is generally supposed to have been the CARP, *cyprinus rufescens* *Linnæi*; and the word rufescens affords the reason for this consecration, or rather *desecration*, since we have seen that every object of a red colour excited their most determined aversion.

There is a particular description of this fish, accompanied with a drawing, in Sonnini. Its native appellation, according to that author, is *Benni*, and he wonders that, being to be found in all parts of Egypt, it escaped the notice of that diligent inquirer, Hasselquist. He describes it as of the same genus with the barbel,

* *Egyptiaca*, p. 157.

the carp, the tench, and some other fishes well known in Europe; a genus, which naturalists have agreed to designate by the name of *Cyprinus*. The scales, with which it is covered, are large, and shining with a silvery lustre. The caudal and fins are of a red saffron colour. “The lustre of its scales,” he adds, “gives much probability to the presumption, that it is the Lepidotus which was revered in ancient Egypt. It is known, from a passage in Athenæus, that this sacred fish, which gave its name to a city and district in Egypt, was of the *carp* genus, and the silvery splendor with which the *Benni* shines, was sufficient to make it be distinguished, and even to induce superstitious people to ascribe to it something precious and supernatural.”*

SACRED PLANTS.

How early in the history of the world certain plants and trees were deemed of a sacred nature is evident from the consecrated groves in which the devotions of the first race of men were performed. The oak in particular seems to have been immemorially consecrated among all nations. Its acorns served for the first food of mankind, and its wide over-shadowing branches for their first temple. It was under the shade of this venerable tree that some of the most awful communications to man, recorded in holy writ, took place; and when the Hebrews deviated from the

* Vol. ii. p. 345.

purity and simplicity of their first worship, it was under the oaks,—the oaks of Bashan,—the rich and fertile district that most abounded in them, that the infatuated nation in question burned incense to the idols of the neighbouring nations. The Jews are told, *Ye shall be ashamed of the oaks which ye have desired, and ye shall be confounded for the gardens that ye have planted:* Isaiah, i. v. 29. By the earliest pagan idolators the oak was consecrated to Jupiter, the sire of gods and men; and the homage paid to the oak by their descendants, the Druids, is too well known to be here insisted upon. Some excuse, perhaps, may be found for the veneration paid in the ancient world to the olive, whose verdant branch brought back to the ark was the symbol of the renovated existence of man and nature. Among the Greeks the olive was consecrated to Minerva, the supreme wisdom, the laurel was sacred to Apollo, the vine to Dionysius, the pine to Cybele, the myrtle to Venus, the reed to Pan, and the cypress to Pluto, for reasons sufficiently obvious to those who consider the rank and character which these fabled personages sustained in the ancient system of mythology. Of the woods sacred to them, or of baked earth, were the statues of these deities in the first ages of Greece generally composed; the precious metals sunk beneath them in value:

Fictilis, et nullo violatus Jupiter auro.—JUV.

But we are wandering in the plains of Greece, when we should be traversing the banks of the Nile!

Imperious necessity compelled a race, who, on account of the burning climate in which they lived, fed principally on fruits and herbage, diligently to explore the nature of plants and shrubs, their beneficial or noxious qualities. The nation who first learned the use of the plough from Osiris was, doubtless, skilled in the history of various sorts of grain, in which their country so greatly abounded, and of which, bread, the great pabulum of human existence, is formed.

Concerning, however, the particular species of bread eaten by the ancient Egyptians, much debate has existed among the learned. Herodotus says, the Egyptians never eat wheaten or barley bread; but employ the grain *olyra*, by some called *zea*, in its composition. By this word Olyra is supposed by some to be intended a superior species of wheat, not now in cultivation; and by others, *spelt*, or rye. It seems to be the *zea amylea, sive olyra*, of Ray. Whatever it was, the race of agriculturists, who inhabited a region of the earth, which even in the patriarch Joseph's time, in years of fertility, produced *corn as the sand of the sea*, (Genesis, xli. v. 49,) a race whose descendants many centuries afterwards annually paid in tribute to Ptolemy Philadelphus no less than fifteen millions of measures of wheat, and whose country, also, in succeeding ages, became the exhaustless granary of Rome, could not be ignorant of whatever concerned the field and the garden. Their great attention to health also would lead them assiduously to cultivate senna, cassia, and the numerous medical drugs which their country produced.

The solemn rites of the temple would require the culture of others, as the olive for its oil, and the odoriferous and other plants for the customary oblation of incense, which took place three times every day, at sun-rising, at high noon, and at sunset; while the tribes of resinous plants were necessary for the indispensable rites of embalming. Of that necessity no greater proof can be adduced than that, in respect to the article of incense, no less than sixteen different ingredients entered into the composition of the noon-day oblation, which they called *kuphi*, and which he there distinctly enumerates, as follows: *honey, wine, raisins, cypress, resin, myrrh, aspalathus, seselis, schoenanthus, bitumen, saffron, dock, the greater and lesser juniper, cardamoms, and the aromatic reed**. All these productions of the vegetable kingdom, at least, all the species of them that are at present known to us, are remarkable for their aromatic, balsamic, or purifying qualities, which, being drawn forth by the application of fire, cleanse the air of its impurities, and by their bland evaporation elevate and enliven the languid spirits. Thus, at least, the Egyptians thought; and thus Plutarch, their learned advocate, labours to explain them.

Nearly all the sacred plants of Egypt will be found engraved among the productions of the vegetable kingdom that decorate the well-known **MENSA ISIACA**, published and commented upon

* Plutarch de Iside et Osiride, p. 111.

by the learned Pignorius. Of the plants thus denominated, the principal are the *nymphæa-nelumbo*, in other words the lotos, or lily of the Nile; the *persea*, sometimes, but very improperly, confounded with the *persica*, or peach-tree; the palm, or date-tree; the *colocasia*, or bean; and the onion, or squill. To these we may add, though of less esteem, the plant *musa*, or banana, the *papyrus*, the sugar-cane, the herb *nepenthe*, supposed to be opium, that soother of human cares, and a few others, enumerated by Alpinus.

These plants had all, in some sort or other, a mystical and symbolical allusion, and attached to men and animals in their hieroglyphical designations, either in their budding, their matured, or their faded state, were intended to exemplify *youth* or *age*, or other corresponding qualities in the individuals whom they adored. Their principal allusion, however, we shall soon perceive, was to the sun and moon, and their operations; while the various periods of their appearing in blossom, or fructification, marked out the different seasons of the revolving year. All the tribe of heliotropes therefore, and other plants, whose flowers and leaves were more immediately influenced, or supposed to be influenced, like those plants, by the rays of the sun, in a particular manner claimed their regard. Plutarch, indeed, goes farther than this, and contends, that, all those trees and plants that exude precious gums should be looked upon, in some degree, sacred to the sun, the trees from which they are obtained, weeping it out by the intense heat of his beams. He had before specified, in particular, *resin* and

myrrh as principal ingredients in the daily incense offered to that luminary*.

THE PALM.

There existed many important alleged reasons, on account of which, whether true or false, this noble plant was held by the ancients in a sacred light. Equally the decoration of the bust of the living hero, and the shrine of departed glory, the ancients attributed something *immortal* to the palm, and the Egyptians exalted it to still higher dignity by making it the symbol of the immortality of the soul itself; that doctrine which they so strenuously inculcated, but which had so little effect towards saving them from the most degrading species of idolatry. The sycamore, too, it may not be amiss to notice, being a species of wood of an almost imperishable nature, was on that account used as a receptacle for that body, which, we have before observed, when speaking of the metempsychosis, they fondly hoped to preserve entire for 3000 years. It should also be recollectcd, that its abundant fruit, the *fig*, though various in flavour, according to its situation, had once served as a wholesome food to nourish the *living* body of the Egyptian.

The reason of the ancients assigning a kind of immortality to the palm-tree, is, probably, to be found in the natural history of that plant: its decaying leaves being immediately succeeded by

* De Iside, concluding page.

new leaves, which arise out of the middle of the remaining ones in everlasting succession. To this perpetual verdure and multiplication of the palm-tree there is an evident allusion in the Psalms ; *The righteous shall flourish like a palm-tree.* (Psalms, 92, 12.) Tall and majestic in its growth, the spouse in the canticles is also in stature compared to the palm. (Cant. vii. verse 7.) It is affirmed of the palm-tree, that, if burned down to the ground, it springs up again fairer and stronger than ever. The benefits conferred on mankind by the trunk, the branches, the leaves, the juice, and the fruit, were thought innumerable. It will be recollected that pillars fabricated after the beautiful model of the palm-tree equally adorned the temple of Solomon, and those of the Thebais ; and by the way it may be observed, that another beautiful and honoured tree of Egypt, the pomegranate, was alike numbered among the architectural ornaments of either nation. In their hieroglyphic system, the Egyptians also represented the *year* by a palm-tree, and the *month* by one of its branches, because, says Ælian, it is the nature of that tree to produce a branch *every month*. Finally, the word, φοινιξ, of oriental origin, signifying a palm-tree, that blooms with unfading verdure, the emblem of revolving cycles ! in all probability, gave birth to the romantic story related by Herodotus, concerning the phœnix, and the lengthened period of *five hundred years*, to which that bird was supposed to live*.

* See Herodot. lib. ii. sect. 73.

THE LOTOS.

Among all other plants in Egypt, especially among the aquatic plants, the *Nymphaea Lotos* (as this particular species is termed by Linnæus) was ever held in the highest estimation. Venerated on account of a thousand qualities, real or imaginary, that seemed to have reference to the natural history or the superstitions of Egypt, it invests, as a kind of coronet, the heads of nearly all the superior deities, or decorates their hands as the most sacred of ornaments.

There can be no doubt but that the grand principle, noticed before, as having been learned by Thales, in Egypt, *aquam esse initium rerum*, or that moisture is the great essential power which supports and cherishes all nature, was the cause of this general homage paid to the *Nymphaea* in Egypt.

The lotos, with an infant seated in its calyx, was, in their hieroglyphic system, the symbol of the rising sun, and marked the connection of the *igneous* with the *aquatic* element, since it is the nature of that plant always to keep its expanded petals floating above the surface of the waters, to whatever height they may arise. Another circumstance that forcibly arrested their attention was, that this flower, called by Herodotus the lily of the Nile, gradually unfolded itself with the beam of the rising sun, and closed with its setting ray. M. de Pauw has affirmed,

that this celebrated plant has disappeared out of Egypt*; but in this, as well as in many other of his assertions, he is proved to be egregiously mistaken, for both Savary and Sonnini saw this beautiful and majestic flower, which rises two feet above the water, flourishing in all its beauty in the lakes of Rosetta. They describe it, as Herodotus formerly did, as of two distinct species, the one bearing a beautifully white, the other a purple, flower. Nor was the lotos only beautiful to behold; it afforded then, as it does now afford, a substantial nutriment to the Egyptians, who fed on the roots, which are said, by the same Herodotus, to grow to the size and form of an apple; and they made a kind of bread of the seeds, dried in the sun, and afterwards baked†. Sonnini informs us, that at this day, “the tubercles, or roots, of the lotos are dried, and preserved to be eaten, boiled like our potatoes, which they nearly resemble in taste. They are sold ready dressed, and at a very reduced price, in the streets of Rosetta, where the lower classes eat them in great quantities‡.

This plant, according to a great modern mythologist, grows entirely in the water; and, amongst its broad leaves, puts forth a

* See and compare De Pauw, vol. i. p. 157, with Savary, vol. i. p. 8, and Sonnini, vol. i. p. 313.

† Herodot. lib. ii. sect. 92.

‡ Sonnini, vol. i. p. 316.

flower, in the centre of which is formed the *seed-vessel*, shaped like a bell or inverted cone, and punctuated on the top with little *cavities* or *cells*, in which the seeds grow to maturity, decay, and again shoot forth: for, the orifices of these cells being too small to let the seeds drop out, when ripe, *new plants* germinate in the places where they were formed, the bulb of the vessel serving as a matrice to nourish them, until they acquire such a degree of magnitude as to burst it open and release themselves; after which, like other aquatic weeds, they take root wherever the current deposits them. This plant, therefore, being *thus productive of itself*, and vegetating from its own matrice, without being fostered in the earth, was naturally adopted by the philosophizing race of Egypt as the symbol of the productive power of the Deity upon the waters*.

The Lotos was equally venerated by the devout Indian, as the enamoured Egyptian. Reverential homage seems, indeed, to have been paid to it over all the region of the Higher Asia. In the ninth Indian Avatar, Buddha is represented sitting in the expand-

* Mr. Knight, on the Phallic Worship of the Ancients, p. 85.—Directly illustrative of this idea is that beautiful symbolic bust of Isis reposing on the expanded flower of the *nymphaea lotos*, in the collection of the British Museum, purchased of Mr. Townley's executors. It is one of the finest sculptured remains of Grecian Antiquity extant; and forms No. 45 of the 10th room of antiquities.

ed calyx of the lotos, as Brahma, in the Hindoo cosmogony, is also pourtrayed on those sculptures that represent what is directly denominated the **LOTOS CREATION**, to distinguish it from other creations in their extensive system of the formation and destruction of worlds. The principal deity in Thibet, Mr. Turner informs us, is the same as the Buddha of Bengal. The Hindoos make frequent pilgrimages to the sacred places in Thibet, and the Thibetians regard and visit, with holy reverence, Benares and other sacred cities of Hindostan. The Thibetians are known to embellish their temples and altars with the leaves of the Lotos; and Sir W. Jones, in one of his discourses, informs us, that a native of Nepaul made prostrations before it on entering his study, where the fine plant and beautiful flowers lay for examination. The sacred plant of the Ganges, however, in some respects differs from that of the Nile. Still the object of veneration is the Lotos. Whence has arisen this marked resemblance in the theological opinions of two nations, so remote from each other; whence, but by tradition from their common ancestors?

THE PERSEA.

The **PERSEA**, from the near resemblance of its name, has been sometimes confounded with the **PERSICA**, or peach-tree, from which plant, however, it is wholly dissimilar, both in respect to its leaves and its fruit. The Persea is a beautiful evergreen, and produces a fruit resembling a pear, of a delicious flavour. The form

of its leaf was thought by the Egyptians to bear a near similitude to the human tongue; that of the kernel to the heart; whence, in their symbolical system, it could not fail of being held in high veneration. The fruit and flowers of this plant form a very frequent and conspicuous ornament on Egyptian figures, and in particular, its leaves may be seen adorning the circular ornament, which, together with a scarabæus, covers the head of Isis, in the very centre of the Mensa Isiaca. Their being used in this central situation of a table, thus devoted to display the rites of the Goddess Isis, and forming so conspicuous a portion of her head-dress, marks the extreme veneration, in Egypt, for this plant. The leaves may also be distinctly observed in Montfaucon's Antiquities, vol. ii. plate 43, figure 6, where Isis is presenting a bunch of them to Osiris.

With respect to this tree having been mistaken for the Persica, another cause, beside that related above, is given by Pliny, from Greek authorities, which he consulted, and is as follows. The Persians, bearing a mortal enmity to the Egyptians, as, indeed, the latter did the former, because their conquerors contrived to convey secretly into Egypt and there to plant a certain tree of a poisonous quality, called by them Persica. They presumed that the

* See Pignorii Mensa Isiaca, table v. and his explication of the whole at p. 43.

Egyptians would be easily induced by the beauty of the tree to regale on its fruit. They did so, but the event was quite contrary to their expectations ; for the goodness of the Egyptian soil had changed the qualities of the tree, and a deadly poison was converted into a delicious viand*. This story is evidently the ingenious fabrication of some Egyptian, or some Greek naturalized in Egypt, to do honour to the salubrity of his native or adopted climate and soil. However that may be, the Persea, whether for its beauty or its fruit, was so highly esteemed by the Romans, that, when in possession of Egypt, they made a law against cutting it down, entitled “*de Perzetis per Aegyptum non excidendis vel vendendis.*”

The Persea was in a particular manner sacred to Harpocrates, the god of silence, who constantly holds his finger pressed upon his lips, and thus he may be seen pourtrayed in a thousand varied positions in Cuper's elegant book on the subject of the devotion paid to that deity. The reason has been given before, because its leaves are in the form of a *tongue*, while its kernel resembles a *heart* in shape ; the heart with religion deeply impressed, the tongue devoutly silent†.

* Plinii, Hist. Nat. lib. xiv. cap. 23.

† Cuperi Harpocrates, p. 21.

COLOCASIA, or EGYPTIAN BEAN.

This plant, thus described by Dioscorides, *Faba Ægyptiaca, cuius radix Colocasia*, has very much perplexed both ancient and modern naturalists, as well in respect to its history as the cause of the determined aversion to it of the ancient inhabitants of that country. In respect to the plant itself, the word *sacred* can only be applied to it in the sense in which it is used in the words *auri sacra famis*. The bean was abhorred: it was the root that was cherished, revered, and eaten. The anathema pronounced against this vegetable by Pythagoras, who, in the reign and under the protection of Amasis, lived so long in Egypt, and was so deeply initiated into its mysteries, **ABSTAIN FROM BEANS**, is well known; and, as all the means of instruction from Egyptian books and monuments have ceased, it is from his conduct and maxims only, as detailed to us by Porphyry and Jamblichus, that we can obtain any genuine information on the subject. The minute attention of that people to whatever concerned their health has been before repeatedly intimated, and a very great proportion of the precepts and maxims that have descended to us in the pages of those writers has immediate relation to that first of human blessings. When Pythagoras submitted to the prescribed rite of circumcision, he imbibed a profound reverence for all their other superstitious ceremonies and opinions. Among the same precepts, or *golden verses*, as, on account of their presumed high value, they are termed, which prescribe abstinence from

beans, is to be found another dogma very congenial with their superstition; he commanded his followers to *abstain from the fish melanure*, so called from the blackness of its tail, and *from living creatures*, i. e. from the wanton destruction of them. He himself and the strict adherents to his doctrines confined themselves to a vegetable diet only; bread made of millet, honey, and its comb; broth made of herbs, fruits, and sallads. Beans are known to be of a flatulent nature, highly indigestible, and are said to be incentives to venery. They were, therefore, highly and equally improper for the Egyptian priest and the Grecian philosopher. The former had from nature a melancholy temperament, and of all farinaceous aliments, according to a learned writer, "beans are the most unfit for a melancholic constitution." The very odour of them excited their abhorrence, which was so strong in that country as almost to intoxicate the senses.

In the mind of the Pythagoreans there was another cause of rooted aversion to beans, they having been taught by their master, as we are informed by Porphyry*, to believe beans to be formed of the same original substance as human beings are composed of; in proof of which they affirmed, that if these vegetables, when young, be buried in the ground, in an earthen vessel, and covered

* In Vita Pythag. p. 57.

close during the space of ninety days, they would, on inspection, be found to be converted into *flesh and blood*. Their horror of them was also increased, because, as Pliny reports their sentiments, the souls of the dead were lodged in them, and the flowers, as they conceived, were inscribed with *infernal letters*, by which they alluded to the two large black specks in the under wings*. These were groundless chimæras, for, doubtless, the true meaning of the precept of abstaining from beans, *κυαμων απεχεσθαι*, was the refraining from inordinate passion, to which, it was before observed, those vegetables were stimulants.

The root which is called Colocasia is of considerable thickness, and formed a nutritious aliment to those of the ancients, who regarded the plant without superstition, as it now does, as well as the bean itself, according to M. Sonnini, of the great body of the Egyptian people. In traversing the Delta, he observes, “the plains, as we passed, were covered with beans in full bloom, diffusing through the air a sweet and pleasing odour. The winds, passing over these beds of flowers, bear away with them the fragrant scent, with which they perfume the towns. This plant was an abomination to the ancient Egyptians; they not only abstained from eating beans, but they were even forbidden to sow them; and the priests could not bear so much as the very sight of them.

* Pliny, lib. xviii. cap. 12.

At present they cover vast fields, and this species of pulse constitutes one of the most common articles of food for the sheep and beasts of burden.*."

The Egyptians, likewise, had another kind of *Colocasia*, a species of arum, and called, by Linnaeus, *arum maximum Ägyptiacum*. It was cultivated principally for the purpose of food. The roots of it were also boiled, and it is said to have much resembled the turnip in taste.

THE ONION, or SQUILL.

Humble and insignificant a vegetable as the onion may appear to us, it was, in the Egyptian mythology, pregnant with wonders, and fertile of benefits. Its various envelopements, or orbicular coats, were, by their astronomical priests, considered not only as symbolical of the spheres, but also of their revolutions in the heavens, one within the other. The onion, venerated by them, was of a deep red colour, and thence they called it the *eye of Typhon*; and, by way of excuse for their veneration of it, they alledged that *God was in the onion, although the onion was not God*. The onion, according to Plutarch, thrives most when the moon is in its wane†.

The particular species adored by them is disputed, but seems to

* Sonnini's Travels, vol. ii. p. 116.

† Plutarch de Iside, p. 17.

have been the squill, or sea-onion, the *scilla radice rubra* of Tournefort, upon the virtues of which, Pliny informs us, Pythagoras composed a distinct dissertation, which, in his account of that plant, he for the most part copied*. This vegetable was worshipped at Pelusium, the dreary dominion of Typhon, in a temple peculiarly consecrated to it, on account, as it was presumed, of its being a sovereign remedy, when properly prepared, for the *tympanum*, or dropsy, to which the inhabitants of that marshy and insalubrious region were in a particular manner subject. From the use of the common onion the people were by no means restrained, for it formed *then*, as it does *now*, a large proportion of their daily food. "Onions," says M. Sonnini, "are sold in the streets and in the markets, raw or dressed, for the merest trifle. The Egyptians eat them raw with their food, to which they serve as a palatable sauce, and I was fond of eating them in the same manner, when they were young, green, and tender. These onions had by no means the same degree of acrimony as those of Europe; they are mild, and neither sting the mouth disagreeably, nor make the eyes water in cutting them. Still they are onions; and, as they differ from ours only in having a less pungent taste and less acrid flavour, there can be no doubt, that the excessive use made of them in Egypt contributes greatly

* Plinii Nat. Hist. lib. xix. cap. 5.

to augment the disposition to *Ophthalmia* in that country*.” The great prevalence of this afflictive disease throughout Egypt, is also aided by other causes, enumerated by this enlightened traveller, and to which the British army, of recent years on duty there, can bear their decided testimony. Among those specified by him, are the vapours exhaling from the stagnant waters in the neglected canals, the excessive heat, the air impregnated with minute nitrous particles, and the acrid and burning dust which the winds diffuse through the atmosphere†.

In respect to the culture of these plants in Egypt, Mr. Hamilton informs us, that “ frequent irrigations are requisite, both when the grain is sowed in furrows hoed for the purpose, and when it is broad-cast, and the young plants removed into ground prepared to receive them. From Kenné they are exported in large quantities to Arabia‡.”

LEEKS, too, are still cultivated and eaten in Egypt, though in less quantities than onions; their medical effects are similar, but not so powerful; it is thought to be the *ampeloprasum* of Dioscorides, a species of allium, of sovereign efficacy against the bite of serpents.

* Sonnini’s Travels, vol. ii. p. 59.

† Ibid. vol. ii. p. 26.

‡ *Ægyptiaca*, p. 421.

ALLIUM, or GARLICK.

During the lapse of ages, this vegetable has ceased to be cultivated in Egypt, for that it was once not only cultivated, but received homage there, we have the testimony of all classical antiquity. To this we may add the recorded regret of the Hebrews, cited above from scripture, concerning their beloved *onions* and *garlick*, in regard to its being an alimentary article, in high and anxious request. The inscription on the great pyramid itself bears witness to the fact. Health and œconomy were the united cause of the preference given to this plant; its medical virtues, according to Dioscorides, were varied and numerous, and in hydropical cases very similar to the onion, as it removed pectoral obstructions, and opened the urinary passages*. Like the onion, too, it was somewhat heating and acrimonious; but those qualities were much mitigated by the Egyptian mode of cultivation, i. e. by abundant irrigation. It resembled the onion in being of a purplish colour, and on that account must be considered as one of the plants consecrated to Typhon. With the termination of that superstition, the cultivation of this vegetable probably also declined. Be this as it may, according to Sonnini, “it is no longer to be seen in the gardens about Rosetta; and the people assure me, that

* For its utility in this and many other diseases, consult Dioscorides, lib. ii. cap. 182.

the soil has been incapable of producing it from time immemorial. Notwithstanding this, a considerable quantity of garlick is still consumed in Egypt; but it is brought from Syria*."

There were, as has been intimated above, a few other plants holden in high esteem in Egypt, though not numbered among the plants deemed sacred, with a few concise remarks on which I shall conclude the curious subject under discussion. At the head of these latter must be ranked the plant denominated by Alpinus

MUSA, or the BANANA.

According to Porphyry, in Eusebius, the *poppy* plant was in Egypt the symbol of that abundant fertility which is produced by the beams of the sun, the universal fructifier†, but more particularly so was the venerated plant, anciently called *musa*, and by the moderns, *banana*, from its quick growth and wonderful productiveness in that climate. Its majestic stalk rises to a great height, and from the centre of its vast leaves, four feet long and two feet broad, there rises, according to the above author, a branch divided into several knobs, out of each of which issue ten or twelve of the fruit, as long as a middle-sized cucumber, and each of which contains a rich, soft, cooling, and sweet-tasted pulp, by which

* Sonnini's Travels, vol. ii. p. 61.

† Apud Euseb. Præp. lib. iii. cap. 10.

thousands of its inhabitants, during many months that it continued in season, were nourished*.

The leaves of this plant, therefore, when seen attached, as they often are, to the *symbolical circle* that typified the solar orb, formed a most appropriate emblem of the productive energy of the supreme deity of Egypt; and when adorning the head or dress of Isis, are no less the picturesque symbol of the high fecundity of feminine nature, enlivened by his beams, and impregnated by his power.

PAPYRUS.

The Papyrus, according to the same author, (p. 43,) called *berd* by the natives, was held also in high veneration among them, for various important reasons; one of which particularly demands notice in a literary work on Egypt. The stalk, either raw or roasted, was occasionally used as food by the Egyptians, and the plant was also applied to a thousand useful purposes; as, furniture for their beds, sails for their shipping, sandals for the priests, and garlands for their gods. In medicine, also, it was in high repute for alleviating or curing many diseases, for which Alpinus may be consulted. But the particular reason above alluded to is their custom of making books of the membranes of this plant, called

* See Prosper Alpinus, p. 22, and the print annexed to his description.

also biblos, the Greek appellation for a book. Their mode of preparing it was by joining two of those membranes transversely together, dipping them in the glutinous water of the Nile, putting them afterwards in a press, and drying them in the sun. In the time of the Ptolemies there was a considerable manufacture for this article at Alexandria, and a few specimens of books formed of the papyrus have descended down to posterity, particularly that of the Gospel of St. Mark at Venice. Some fragments of it are also preserved in the British Museum.

CANNA SACCHARIFERA.

Another plant, equally important and abundant, was the *canna saccharifera*, or sugar-cane, which, from the ignorance in those remote ages of preparing it by fire, and extracting the inspissated juice, was eaten with avidity, while the canes were green and tender. With the same avidity they are eaten, according to M. Sonnini, at this day, although they have learned the art of manufacturing and refining it at Cairo, and whence a considerable quantity is sent annually to the sultan, at Constantinople. “The common people, however, do not wait for the extraction of the sugar, but eat the canes green, which are sold in bundles in all the cities*.”

* Sonnini, vol. ii. p. 228.

NEPENTHES.

Finally, the famed NEPENTHES, so celebrated by Homer* for its virtues, in inducing a temporary oblivion of distracting cares, was the production of a district near Diospolis in Upper Egypt, and that it was the true Theban opium very little doubt now remains among the learned. Our British Homer, too, has commemorated the exhilarating effects of the nepenthes, in these lines of his Comus.

Behold this cordial julep here,
That flames and dances in its chrystral bounds.
Not that NEPENTHES which the wife of Thone
In Ægypt gave to Jove-born Helena,
Is of such power as this.

The narcotic virtues of that plant and of the *Hyoscyamus Albus*, numbered by Alpinus among the plants that were peculiar to Higher Egypt, (Nascitur Cayri prope pyramides, p. 52,) seem also to have been immemorially known and made use of by that inquisitive race of philosophers.

* Odyssey, lib. iv. p. 220.

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS ON THE ABOVE DISPLAY OF
EGYPTIAN SUPERSTITIONS.

The above aggregate mass of information, collected from the most authentic writers of antiquity, concerning the animals, plants, and other objects deemed sacred, in ancient Egypt, will, it is hoped, prove useful towards impressing the mind of the reader with a clearer conception (which is all that was intended) of many of her hieroglyphic sculptures than it before entertained. By far the greater part of them, however, from our utter ignorance of their deeper philosophical arcana, both as they appear individually, and in their combination with others, must ever remain an inscrutable mystery! The intimate connexion, also, of the history of many of these animals and plants, with that of their civil rites and festival institutions, as may have been remarked in the accounts of those annually celebrated at Bubastis and Sais, and even to this day, in some degree, kept up, having been occasionally pointed out and explained, will still farther unfold the mystical system on all occasions resorted to by this allegorizing people. Without a clue to their ideas, like the present, however limited and humble,—without a knowledge of the latent qualities and properties assigned by them to the animals and plants so innumerably and so indelibly carved upon the surface of the columns and obelisks, they are, and ever must be, dumb and uninstructive,

however interesting, monuments; but with that knowledge the graver speaks, and the marble becomes eloquent.

The mythologic system, which their inventive genius had formed, indeed exists no longer; but the natural phænomena that gave birth to that system remain, and, excepting those inevitable changes that take place during the great revolutions of time through every region of the earth, will remain for ever,—as long, at least, as the Nile, their personified Osiris, shall continue to flow, and the Typhonian whirlwinds, the dreadful *khamsin* of the present day, shall waft thither the drifted sands from the burning desarts of Lybia.

Although we have not been able to penetrate into the whole of their mysterious purport, yet those renowned Grecian philosophers, so frequently alluded to above, Thales, Pythagoras, and Plato, during their long abode in Egypt, undoubtedly *had*, and the substance of both their religion and philosophy has descended down to us through the medium of their works, or such remains of them, as, through their disciples, have reached posterity. At the time of the visit of Thales to that country, in the sixth century before Christ, the three grand colleges of Egyptian learning, that of Heliopolis, that of Memphis, and that of Thebes, flourished in the zenith of their glory under the patronage of Amasis, a prince renowned for equity and wisdom. For, as yet, the frantic Cambyses had not poured desolation over the fertile valley of

Egypt, slaughtered her priests, and burned her temples. That memorable event took place in the reign of Psammetichus, his son and successor, while Pythagoras resided there, who was taken prisoner by the Persian invader, and, *happily for science*, was sent with other captives to Babylon. During his sojourn of twenty-two years among the priests of Thebes and Heliopolis, he had, doubtless, drank deep at the fountains of Egyptian science, and the fact is demonstrated by the symbolical mode of instruction adopted by him afterwards; by his perpetual injunctions respecting purification, external and internal; and by his own rigid adherence to the most abstemious regimen.

One hundred and fifty years after Pythagoras, the illustrious founder of the academic sect, already instructed by his master Socrates, in the leading principles of the Pythagorean philosophy, became a pupil of the Egyptian priests at Heliopolis and Sais, of whom he learned mathematics, and that still sublimer doctrine, the Immortality of the Soul, which he afterwards taught publicly at Athens, and which procured for him the glorious appellation of Divine. Thus, while the young students at Athens, according to Valerius Maximus, were inquiring for Plato, and languishing for his instructions, that philosopher was indulging his mathematical contemplations, and his passion for geometry, on the distant shores of the Nile, taking the altitude of the pyramids, surveying the canals cut from that river, and measuring the immense dams

that restrained its rising waters—being himself but a disciple to the sages of the Thebais*. If Plato were thus employed during his twelve years' residence in Egypt, his active, exploring, and penetrating genius had, doubtless, well scanned the hieroglyphics which were principally allusive to that important event, and the other physical phænomena of Egypt. In what has remained to us, therefore, from those authors, we may possess all that was valuable of their philosophy and theology, and the loss of the remainder, being chiefly adapted to local circumstances, is, perhaps, not deeply to be regretted.

We come at length to the consideration of a more important point of this extended dissertation concerning the worship of the brute animals in Egypt. The advocates of the Egyptians, for they have not wanted many learned advocates besides Plutarch, may soften down their conduct in this respect, by denominating it only a symbolical devotion, but, inasmuch as it had a direct tendency to transfer to the creature the reverence due to the creator, it was idolatry.

The ox, indeed, was professedly worshipped only as the emblem of the supreme generative power of animal nature; the serpent, under the name of Agathodæmon, or the *good genius*, as the

* Val. Max. lib. viii. cap. 7.

symbol of the supreme source of intellectual life ; and the scarabæus, being of both sexes, as the emblem of the two-fold productive energy in deity ; they conceiving *that* deity to be both *male* and *female*. Thus the philosophizing priests explained the matter to their disciples, and thus Plutarch and Jamblichus have reported them to us.

The sun, too, was the radiant emblem, the image of the *governor mundi* ; but the degraded conceptions of the great mass of the people of Egypt exalted these emblems of deity and its attributes to the rank of *deities themselves* ; and the sun in particular was looked upon as the actual *governor of that world* which his beams only irradiated. Conformably, also, to the notions which they had imbibed in Chaldæa, the planets were esteemed the flaming ministers of his pleasure through the boundless expanse of heaven ; the dispensers of his beneficence, or the heralds of his vengeance. Whatever might be the esoteric doctrine of the priest, the views, the belief, of the populace went no farther than the object before them. The Noachic creed of *one only supreme God* was effaced from their hearts. Their Hebrew slaves had also largely imbibed the infection, and it was become necessary that a new code should be divulged, to the apostate race of man, which took place soon after the exodus of the latter, at Sinai ; and in which, as was previously intimated, and as we shall now proceed to demonstrate, the most pointed anathemas are directly levelled against the abominations of Egypt.

The learned Selden, whom his not less learned contemporary, Grotius, justly denominated the *glory of the English nation*, has in his book *De Diis Syriis* given a kind of commentary upon the second commandment of the decalogue, in which he affirms, that Moses, or rather HE who inspired Moses, without profaning the sacred page by the direct mention of the *names* of the various human, bestial, and other baser gods of Egypt, has contrived strikingly to pourtray them by their qualities and attributes, in a compendious but complete enumeration of their respective rank and functions in the Egyptian ritual. The affinity thus strongly pointed out by Selden, and we may add with equal force by Sir John Marsham, in his *Canon Chronicum*, between the terms used in the decalogue, and the idolatrous practices of the Egyptians, is demonstrated in his first dissertation, where he alludes to the solemn recapitulation made by the Hebrew legislator, a little previous to his dissolution, of the awful facts that took place at Sinai, and of the precepts then promulgated amid the thunderings that shook that holy mountain.

The first instance brought by Mr. Selden, in proof of his assertion, is the following passage ; in which Moses, he justly contends, meant to stigmatize the worship paid in Egypt to Osiris, Isis, and Horus*, who were generally represented in a human form, though

* Selden *de Diis Syriis*, Syntag. i. cap. 4, p. 151.

often with the additional head of an Hawk, or Ibis, he tells them ; *Non vidistis aliquam Similitudinem in die qua locutus est vobis Dominus in Horeb, de medio ignis, ne forte decepti, faciatis vobis sculptam Similitudinem aut Imaginem MASCULI vel FÆMINÆ.* After having thus forbidden them to make use of the human similitude, he adds, nor of beasts that are upon the earth ; *vel Similitudinem omnium JUMENTORUM quæ sunt super terram* ; by which he doubtless alludes to the oxen Apis, adored at Memphis, and Mnevis, at Heliopolis, the goat at Mendez, the cat, the dog, under the names of Ælurus, and Anubis, the wolf, the lion, and other bestial figures. When he subjoins *vel avium sub cælo volantium*, it must be obvious that Moses alludes to the sacred birds, the hawk, the ibis, the eagle, the golden scarabœus, and others enumerated above. Again, when he speaks of reptiles, crawling upon the earth, *atque reptilium qui moventur in terra*, he alludes to the serpent, the ichneumon, and the cerastes or horned adder, before noticed ; and by the fishes *sive piscium qui sub terrâ moventur in aquis*, he means the latos and oxyrinchus, the crocodile, hippopotomus, and others recently described. Their horticular deities are not indeed here specified, but the addiction of the Hebrews, their servile imitators in most things, to superstitious rites in *gardens and consecrated groves*, has been noticed in a preceding page, and through them the similar idolatries of their former tyrants are anathematized.

It is rather singular that, notwithstanding the very marked

allusion above pointed out, to the superstitions of Egypt, Bishop Patrick, and some other commentators, should doubt the existence at this early period of this multiform idolatry, and denies the validity of the inference of Sir J. Marsham and Mr. Selden. But surely the reply of Moses to Pharaoh, cited at page 75 preceding, *quod si mactaverimus ea (jumenta) quæ colunt Ægyptii, they will stone us*; and that still stronger passage in Exodus, denouncing the judgment of Omnipotence itself; **AND AGAINST ALL THE GODS OF EGYPT WILL I EXECUTE JUDGMENT**, Exodus, xii. 12; must be considered as a full answer to every objection of this kind*.

The final result of these multiplied idolatries, of these accumulated crimes, of the Egyptians, were the tremendous anathemas pronounced against them by that JEALOUS GOD, who declares that HE will admit of no rival on his almighty throne, and which are recorded in the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel, but especially by the latter, who in one place is made to declare that henceforth, i. e. after the conquest of it by Nebuchadnezzar, *Egypt should be a base kingdom, or a nation of slaves, and, in another, there shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt*, Ezek. xxx. 13. Cambyses, it will be recollect, not many years after invading Egypt, with his own hand stabbed the principal God Apis, (the representative of Osiris) destroyed her priests with the sword, and her temples

* See and compare Patrick on Deut. iv. 20, with Marsham, Can. Chron. Seculum ix. p. 196.

with fire. His successor, Ochus, went still farther, and had the same venerated deity served up at a banquet to himself and his friends*. After their remorseless tyrants, the Persians, had been conquered by the Macedonian chief, they became subject to himself and the Ptolemies, his successors ; then to the Romans ; next to the Saracens ; then to the Mamelucs, a generation of slaves ; and, finally, Egypt fell under the Othman tyranny, in whose hands it still remains. Thus for above two thousand years may Egypt truly be said to have continued a *base kingdom*, not governed *by any prince of the land of Egypt*, but, in general, by cruel and rapacious foreigners. So unalterable are the decrees of Omnipotence !

It may not be improper, also, to notice that many of those animals, once the most cherished and deemed *sacred* in Egypt, are now numbered among the vilest refuse of the creation ; in particular the so highly venerated **dog**, the latrator Anubis of antiquity, so far from being looked upon in a sacred light, is esteemed, by the present inhabitants, as an unclean beast, not even admitted into their houses, whose very touch is defilement. Meagre, emaciated, and diseased, says M. Sonnini, they prowl about the streets and suburbs of Alexandria for scanty supplies of food, and support a wretched existence by raking into the filth and garbage of that ruined city†. The venerated wolf, or jackal, anciently

* Diod. Sic. lib. xvi. p. 557.

† Sonnini, vol. i. p. 282.

the sublime emblem of the sun, is no longer worshipped in a superb temple at Lycopolis, but, according to the last named author, during the day, those abhorred animals seek a retreat from the rage of man in the dreary catacombs adjoining that city, and by night, assembled in numerous multitudes, ravage the deserted suburbs, and fill the air with their hideous yellings*.

* Ibid, vol. i. p. 140.

OBSERVATIONS RESPECTING THE PRESUMED CHANGE OF
THE COURSE OF THE RIVER EUPHRATES; AND THE
CAUSES WHICH NECESSARILY INDUCED THAT CHANGE.

To the eye that takes a philosophical survey of this vast globe of earth and water, and considers the important vicissitudes which almost every century produces upon its surface, no partial changes that can take place in particular regions of it will appear very extraordinary, especially where the nature of the soil and the climate have a natural tendency to promote those changes. The river Nile, whose wonderful properties we have been so recently considering, once emptied itself into the Mediterranean by seven mouths. These mouths—these *septemgemini Ostia Nili*, were denominated, as the classical reader well knows, the Canopic, the Bolbitic, the Sebennytic, the Phatnic, the Mendesian, the Tanitic, or Saïtic, and the Pelusian; and derived their names from so many great cities erected on their respective branches. But what are become of those seven mouths, and those seven great cities, by whose names they were distinguished, of a date in antiquity so much posterior to Babylon? The former have, ages since, been stopped up by the incessant accumulation of sand and mud, and the latter, for the most part, have been buried in the encroaching ocean; their massy ruins and subverted columns being only to be occasionally seen on the retiring of the tide.

The exact number, indeed, of *seven*, that of the *planets*, is always to be suspected among an astronomical race; but, whatever was their number in ancient times, the Nile is now known to discharge itself into the ocean by two grand outlets only, that of Rosetta, to the west, and that of Damietta, to the east. What has occurred, in respect of its latter course, to that mighty river the Oxus, whose stream, after dividing the two vast empires of Iran and Touran, or in other words Persia and Scythia, in the time of Strabo, poured itself by two vast branches into the Caspian sea? Its northern branch, divided and exhausted by a thousand drains in its passage over the desert of Tartary, is now no longer able to reach the Caspian, but terminates in a vast lake, that of Arral; while the ancient channel, that conveyed it thither, is still discernible, and remains dry*.

Gour, the famed capital of eastern Hindostan, the Ganga Regia of Ptolemy, once reared its majestic head on the banks of the Ganges; it exhibits now, like Babylon, only a waste of ruins, the haunt of tygers, and is distant many miles from the great river whence it derived its classical name. In some places these mighty vicissitudes are brought about by a defect in the supply of that powerful agent in nature, the WATERY ELEMENT, in others by a superabundance of it; and in others again by an agent, almost as powerful, a deluge of overwhelming sand! From the incessant

* See Abulghazi's Hist. of the Tartars, vol. ii. p. 448.

changes that have occurred by these means, it has probably arisen that the accounts of ancient geographers and historians in many respects so little accord with the actual state of objects at the present day; and many facts, apparently greatly exaggerated, may thus be reconciled to truth and probability. Thus the lake Mæris in Egypt is said by Herodotus to have been 3600 stadia, or no less than 450 miles, in circumference, and of unfathomable depth! These dimensions, however, appear extravagant and incredible. Pliny's more moderate scale of computation makes it only 250 miles in circuit, and proportionably deep; but whether this same lake was a vestige of the Mediterranean, or the labour of human industry, is a question not yet wholly decided. According to Pococke, the lake Mæris is no more in reality than about 50 miles long, and 10 broad*. It has probably been in great part filled up with the accumulated sand and mud from the Nile during 2000 years. The great and pestilential lake SIRBON, too, of which so much has been said above, has been for ages swallowed up, and lost in an ocean of sand.

If these great changes have sometimes taken place, where the ground is of a firm and durable contexture, how much more liable must they be to happen in a country where the soil is of a particularly soft and yielding nature, like that of Babylonia, whence arises its aptitude for cultivation, and that boundless fertility, to

* Compare Herodot. lib. ii. cap. 149; Plinii Nat. Hist. lib. v. cap. 9; and Pococke, vol. i. p. 64.

be noticed presently, for which it has been in all ages famous ; a country intersected by innumerable streams, natural and artificial, and which, being neglected, have turned the greater portion of it into what, in a former page, it has been stated to have originally been—a vast morass ! “ Various parts of scripture,” I there remarked, “ confirm this account of the swampy nature of the Babylonian territory. *Willows*, that flourish only in a humid soil, are represented as growing there in abundance. *By the Rivers of Babylon we sat down and wept*, say the captive and desponding Hebrew race : *We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof*, Psalm cxxxvii. 2. The plural word *rivers*, used in this place, was doubtless intended to signify the numerous aqueducts and canals that, independently of the Euphrates, intersected the country in almost every direction. The prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah go still farther than this, and, in allusion to the whole country abounding so much with water, from these causes, and numerous land springs, call it the **SEA OF BABYLON**. “ *I will dry up the sea of Babylon, and make her springs dry.*” Again, “ *The sea is come upon her ; she is covered with the multitude of the waves thereof*, Jeremiah li. 36, 42.” Profane authorities, in respect to this fact, were also abundantly cited ; and more will hereafter be adduced.

I must beg to preface the summary strictures which I am about to submit to the classical reader, on the presumed change of the course of the Euphrates, by apologizing for what, it is hoped, may

be considered as a venial error in a work of such a comprehensive nature as the present. Throughout these pages, I have occasionally used the term CHALDÆA for BABYLONIA; which however, in strict geographical language, is incorrect. By Babylonia is properly meant the country in the immediate vicinity of the city of Babylon; by Chaldaea is to be understood the region extending southward to the Persian gulph, and including the vast lakes or marshes, occasioned principally by the overflowing of the Euphrates in very remote periods, which, according to Pliny, anciently discharged its waters into the sea, by a *mouth of its own*, 27 miles distant from its present place of efflux*. Its passage by this channel to the ocean, he says, was obstructed by the *Orchoeni*, and other inhabitants of that sandy desert, who, by various drains, diverted its stream for the purpose of irrigating their parched domains. Euphratem præclusere Orchoeni, et accolæ, agros rigantes: nec nisi Pasitigri nunc defertur in mare. Evident vestiges of this ancient course of the Euphrates, to the point of its disemboguing itself into the Persian gulph, were visible in the time of Pliny; are distinctly marked in most of the ancient maps of Asia; and with particular accuracy in that of D'Anville, annexed to his dissertation on the Euphrates and Tigris, to which we shall hereafter have occasion to direct the attention of the reader.

* Plinii Nat. Hist. lib. vi. cap. 27.

The bold design and the immense labour of erecting a capital on such a spot, as well as the intimate acquaintance which the first architects must have had with the principles of mechanical and mathematical science, and more especially with hydraulics, to drain off the superabundant waters, and to form those vast lakes and canals of which we read in ancient authors—not to mention the immense engines of that kind necessary to elevate to the height of two hundred feet the waters of the Euphrates, for the purpose of irrigating the famous *pensile gardens*—these facts have been the subject of consideration in the preceding portion of this publication ; but there are three or four prodigious works beside these, which, as being particularly connected with the river, with a view to this particular dissertation on the change of its course, were not so minutely described as will now be necessary. These are—1, the Nahar-Malka, or *regius fluvius*, so called because the presumed work of the ancient Assyrian sovereigns, and this canal conveyed the waters of the Euphrates, at the period of the inundation, to the spot on the Tigris, where Seleucia was afterwards built ; 2, the great lake on the north of Babylon called Kerbelah ; 3, the canal called Pallacopas ; and 4, another great lake fifty miles south west of Babylon, now denominated Bahr Nedjef, into which that canal emptied itself as a vast reservoir for the superabundant waters, at the period of the inundation. The great pains and skill used in constructing these lakes and canals is evident from the vestiges of

most of them remaining distinctly visible at this day. The Nahar-Malka, in particular, may be traced through its whole extent, having been repaired by the emperors Trajan and Julian, in their expedition against the Parthians ; and was employed, we know from history, as late as the time of the Caliphs, for the purpose of irrigation : in so durable a manner was this canal originally formed, that even now, in Mr. Rich's opinion, it might be effectually repaired for the same purpose*. From this great canal various minor channels were cut, and traces of others are still to be found over the whole extent of Babylonia, so that, at the period when the inundation was at its height, and all these streams were in motion, it might well be denominated, in the prophetic language, *the sea of Babylon.* Arrian acquaints us, that of the two rivers, the Tigris and Euphrates, which bound Mesopotamia on the east and west, the latter glides over a more elevated bed, and transmits its superfluous waters by many canals to the former, by which, and the influx of other considerable streams, the Tigris becomes in its progress to the ocean a great and impetuous river; while the Euphrates on its approach thither, or rather to KORNA, the place of its junction with the Tigris, by such repeated drains, is much diminished in magnitude†. The imminent danger therefore of being

* Memoir, p. 17.

† Arrian, lib. vii. cap. 7.

drowned on the one hand, or of being famished on the other, might well stimulate the Babylonians thus assiduously to preserve, by means of these lakes and canals, the just equilibrium of the waters.

Besides the Nahar-Malka, ancient writers mention three other canals, which it is necessary to specify, the *Narraga*, or rather Nahr-raga, *Nahar* signifying *fluvius*; the *Barsares*, now denominated Nahr-Sarsar; and that known by the name of *Isa*, which at this day continues to flow. All these, however, were in fame far inferior to the Nahar-Malka. These four canals all emanated from the eastern banks of the Euphrates, though the exact place of their exit from that river, and of the junction with the Tigris, of *each of them*, is not known. Possibly there originally existed only two canals of actual communication, the Nahar-Malka, and that now distinguished as the Isa; the others might have been solely applied to the purposes of irrigation. The first, the Nahar-Malka, or Regia Fossa of Polybius*, joined the Tigris, as was before stated, at Seleucia, and is supposed to be the Chebar of Scripture. The Nahr-Raga had its issue at a city named Sippura, or Hippara, as Pliny misnames it, but in respect to its point of communication with the Tigris is silent†; the Barsares of Ptolemy, according to D'Anville, is the modern Tsartsar, or Nahr-Sarsar‡; while the Isa, issuing at

* Polybius, lib. vii. cap. 51.

† Plinii Nat. Hist. lib. vi. cap. 26.

‡ D'Anville's Ancient Geography, p. 471.

Felugia, according to Major Rennell, entered the Tigris where Old Bagdad now stands*.

After having so particularly considered the canals on the eastern side of the river, it will be important to the end proposed by this essay, if we enlarge a little upon the greater works, the lakes and canals, that lay on its western banks. I take it for granted that the reader bears in mind what, from Arrian and Strabo, will be found recorded at p. 75 of the preceding portion of this work, that the annual inundation of this formidable river, against whose irruption all these preparations were made, owes its origin to the melting of the snow in the Armenian mountains, where its sources lie, in the spring; and that about the summer solstice, or the middle of June, it rises to its greatest height, which, according to some travellers, is *twelve*, and according to others *fifteen* feet perpendicular, at which time, were it not for the judicious distribution of the waters, by means of dykes and canals, the whole of the surrounding country would be deluged.

The great lake properly called Kerbelah, from a town of that name situated on its northern extremity, but, from the tomb and mosque of **Hosein**, the grandson of Mohammed, erected near it, of later years more generally known by the name of *Mesjid Hosein*,

* Rennell's Illustrations of the Anabasis of Xenophon, p.78.

† Arrian, lib. v. cap. 27, and Strabo.

lies in a north-west direction of, and somewhat above, Babylon. According to Herodotus and other classical authors, often cited before, it was originally 40 miles square, 160 miles in circumference, and of a depth sufficient to receive the waters of the Euphrates, which were diverted into it by a canal, while the embankment of the river, and the construction of the bridge and tunnel, were going on. Of the clay taken from this vast excavation, formed into bricks and baked in the furnace, were those embankments formed, and, when finished, the outlet by the canal was closed, and the river permitted to flow in its accustomed course. But though the outlet was for the present closed ; yet we are informed that both the lake, and the canal that led to it, were preserved after the completion of the work ; the former to serve as a vast reservoir of water to irrigate the adjacent country, and the latter to be occasionally opened to discharge the overflowing waters at the period of the rise of the river. Stupendous and almost incredible as these works appear, the preceding pages demonstrate that they were only in unison with the taste and genius of the age, and the magnificent designs of the founder of Babylon, whether Semiramis, or Nebuchadnezzar. The lake Kerbelah has for many ages been dried up, except during excessive inundations, but its bed remains, and was seen in its dry state by Niebuhr, in his route from Basra to Aleppo.

Eight hundred furlongs, or fifty miles, below Babylon, from the

western bank of the Euphrates, was cut the canal called Pallacopas, by which the redundant waters of the river were conveyed into another great lake, anciently called Bahr Nedsjif by the Arabians, but which name, like that of the former, and for the same reason, has been exchanged for that of *Mesjid Ali*, or the tomb and mosque of the venerated prophet ALI, who was killed at the adjoining, but now deserted, town of Kufa. This lake is about fifty miles in extent, and ninety in circuit, and there is the most probable ground for supposing, that in ancient times a communication existed between both lakes, and which was carried on from the latter quite to the ocean. According both to Niebuhr, and the accurate geographer D'Anville, the existence of such a channel from Mesjid Ali to the sea is indisputable, and the latter has marked its course by dotted lines on his invaluable map, appended to his account of the Euphrates and Tigris, in the Mémoires of the French Academy*. M. Niebuhr, indeed, is decidedly of opinion, in which opinion he is joined by Dr. Vincent, that, in very ancient times, a canal ran parallel with the Euphrates, quite from Heet, eight days journey above Babylon, through the whole length of the desert, consequently fertilized by it, till it issued near Teredon, now the Khore Abdillah, in the gulph of Persia. Prodigious as a work of this kind must have been, embracing a tract of country nearly 800

* See Mémoires De L'Academie, &c. vol. xxx. p. 132, and the illustrative map annexed.

miles in extent, it was not *too great* an undertaking for the enterprising genius of that romantic age*.

These facts are here summarily brought together, to show, in the first place, how extensively, on each bank of the river, Babylon was covered with lakes and canals ; to prove, secondly, with what anxious solicitude by its founders, an excess of the river, at the time of the inundation, was guarded against ; and, thirdly, to demonstrate how *fatally* a total and long continued neglect of these safe-guards, these canals, and these reservoirs, must operate towards the inundation and utter destruction of the whole country.

The banks of these canals and lakes, made verdant by irrigation, were doubtless then lined with the palaces of Assyrian princes and nobles ; of which the evident remains innumerable dispersed through that now depopulated waste, are frequently seen by travellers in their route through the desert. To support the vast population, even on its lowest calculation, of Babylon in its glory, every acre must have been cultivated, and wonderful, indeed, according to Herodotus, was its productiveness, for he affirms that of all countries which had come under his observation, this was the most fruitful of corn, yielding never less than *two hundred fold*, and in favourable seasons even *three hundred fold*, the ears of their

* See Niebuhr's Travels, vol. ii. p. 217, and Vincent's Nearchus, p. 471.

wheat as well as of their barley being four digits in size*. He then proceeds to mention the prodigious height to which the plants, millet and sesamum, grow there, and the universal cultivation of the palm which produces the inhabitants bread, wine, and honey. Pliny, lib. viii. cap. 17, fully confirms this statement. The Babylonians, he says, cut their corn twice a year, and he adds that the soil there is so rich and luxuriant, they are sometimes compelled to drive their cattle from the pastures, lest they should perish through satiety. It is painful for the historian to subjoin that the greatest part of that fine country, is at present tenanted by the *wild beasts of the desert; an habitation of the bittern, and pools of water*, Isaiah, xiv. 23.

Quitting these more general and comprehensive views, which concern the province of Babylonia rather than the capital, we return to the more particular contemplation of the ruins of that capital, and the presumed, or rather, we may say, the certain change of the course of the Euphrates. In the survey of those ruins, the reader must ever bear in mind the two-fold nature of the bricks of which they are composed. The ordinary buildings, he will recollect, were constructed of bricks *baked in the sun only*; these were in their nature loose and friable, and easily reduced to their original elements; the walls and public edifices in general

* Herodotus, Clio, sect. 193.

consisted of bricks, *burned in the furnace*; these, being hard and durable, were carried away for the purpose of constructing Seleucia, Ctesiphon, Bagdad, Bassora, and all the other great cities that rose to eminence upon the decline of Babylon. When, in addition to all this, it is considered that this same system of depredation has been going on for above 2000 years in a country which, from its situation, has ever been the favourite region for the erection of great cities by the successive tyrants of Asia, and yet that such immense masses of them, as described by recent travellers, should still remain in the neighbourhood of Hella, it must excite his wonder, as was before hinted, that, instead of the enormous heaps of ruins described in their pages, any remains at all of the Babylonian capital should at this day exist.

That great but unfortunate city, it should be recollectcd, in other respects, also, contained within its walls and its immediate environs the inevitable seeds of its own destruction. Herodotus, in the place before cited, says, the city was surrounded with a trench very wide, deep, and full of water; and prodigiously wide and deep it must have been to have afforded materials for constructing walls, as he immediately adds, 200 cubits high, and fifty wide, with 250 watch-towers at regular and stated distances above them. These were, for the most part, built with furnace-baked bricks, a mass of solid masonry unrivalled in the world! These walls, we are informed, were afterwards, by Darius, enraged at the long and reso-

lute resistance which, by their aid, the Babylonians had made to his besieging army, reduced to the height of fifty cubits only ; and where could the stupendous pile of ruins occasioned by this demolition be better disposed of, by a conqueror resolved to render a rebellious city as defenceless as possible, than by returning them to the vast excavation whence they were originally taken. By this means it must have been nearly filled up again, and that deep fosse intended for the security and defence of the city, became the sepulchre of its glory, for such the walls of Babylon were accounted. The fifty remaining cubits may be supposed to have afforded the materials for the construction of other cities, in its neighbourhood above alluded to, and future researches may yet find out the lines of circumvallation where the other fragments lie buried.

That Babylon should become a *desolation*, was recorded among the high and irrevocable decrees of that Providence, which generally employs *second causes* for the execution of them ; and these *second causes*, in addition to those already hinted at, we shall now endeavour distinctly to enumerate. For the principal of these, it is necessary for us to ascend higher up in the historic page, and see the great Cyrus, the first conqueror of Babylon, assailing and taking the city by the very means made use of by Semiramis for the purpose of adorning and defending it.

For two entire years had that consummate general, experienced in all the military manœuvres of the age, laid ineffectual siege to

that great city. The besieged, provided with sufficient stores of every kind to last them twenty years, and fully confiding in the strength of their walls, from those high ramparts insulted his soldiers, and derided his efforts. Despairing to take a city so strongly fortified and so numerously defended, by open violence, Cyrus had recourse to stratagem; and, being informed that at a certain great annual festival, then nearly approaching, the Babylonians were accustomed to resign themselves to unbounded licentiousness, and usually passed the night in the extreme of intemperance, he fixed upon that period for the accomplishment of his project. Having heard of the turning of the river by the Babylonian princess, and the vast lake formed for the reception of its waters, he determined on following her example. Accordingly, after having first stationed strong bodies of soldiers at the two extremities of the city, that is, at the places of the entrance and exit of the stream, with directions to move forward when the water became sufficiently shallow, he ordered the banks to be broken down, and, diverting the current into the lake aforesaid, Cyrus, in a short time, became master of the city, according to the well-known account of Herodotus*.

If this work of breaking down the river-bank were negligently performed, or the banks afterwards not made sufficiently firm to resist

* Herodotus, Clio, sect. 191:

the encroaching stream, as would probably happen in the hour of tumult and conquest, inundation must necessarily ensue on the one side, and the canals on the other be deprived of their due quantity of water for the purposes of irrigation. I say *if*—though doubtless there were in the army of Cyrus excellent mechanics and artificers effectually and skilfully to perform it; and as Babylon was now, by conquest, become a province of the Persian empire, it was most probably effectually performed, though afterwards neglected. The learned Dean Prideaux, indeed, imputes solely to this diversion of the stream the consequent destruction of the country; and his language is so strong, and his sentiments on this subject, which he had profoundly considered, are so generally right, that I hope the reader will pardon my inserting his statement in this place. His words are these: “Cyrus, draining the river by this lake and canal, by that means took the city. And when, by the breaking down of the banks at the head of the canal, the river was turned that way, no care being taken afterwards again to reduce it to its former channel, by repairing the breach, all the country on that side was overflowed and drowned by it. And the current, by long running this way, at length making the breach so wide as to become irreparable, unless by an expense as great as that whereby the bank was at first built, a whole province was lost by it. While the current which went to Babylon afterwards grew so shallow, as to be scarce fit for the smallest navigation, which was

a farther detriment to that city*.” I cannot, however, agree with the learned Dean in assigning to *this sole cause* the destruction of Babylon; others were combined with it, which shall now be submitted to the reader.

The above, it will be observed, is solely the account of Herodotus, but Xenophon—who resided for a long time in the court of the *younger Cyrus*, and had on that account an opportunity of learning more authentic particulars concerning this siege than Herodotus could obtain from common report at Babylon, has added a circumstance of great importance in this investigation—that, during the long continuance of the siege, Cyrus caused lines of circumvallation to be drawn quite round the city, and at the same time dug a *large and deep ditch*, into which the waters of the river were diverted by numerous drains, in order to cut off all possible intercourse of the besieged with the adjacent country; and, in fact, not knowing of their vast magazines, to compel them by the pressure of famine to surrender. To guard the ditch thus cut, and to prevent the vigour of his troops from being wasted by excessive and constant fatigue, Cyrus divided his vast army into twelve different bodies, which took their turn, during each successive month, to guard these lines and this enormous trench†. Here was another

* Prideaux’s *Connections*, vol. i. p. 97, edit. folio, 1717.

† Xenophontis *Cyropædia*, lib. vi. p. 522, edit. Hutchinson, 1727.

source of deep exhausture to the parent stream, and another channel for the waters to flow into, whensoever the proper bed, owing to obstruction from the accumulation of ruins, was rendered *unnavigable*, as we shall hereafter find proved to be the case. Speaking of this work of its first conqueror, Mr. Rich observes; “from the yielding nature of the soil I can readily conceive the ease with which Cyrus dug a trench round the city, sufficient to contain the river. I have not, however, been able to discover any traces either of this trench, or the lines of circumvallation*.” Those repeated visits, and more minute researches, which he engages to make, on the spot, may yet enable Mr. Rich to discover some remains both of this trench and the original fosse.

Whatever injury was done to Babylon in this first invasion and conquest of it, a still greater calamity befel the city, when the successors of Cyrus, a few years after, transferred the seat of empire to Susa. This latter capital soon became the favourite residence of the Persian sovereigns, when the mighty works at Babylon, which had cost the toil of ages to construct, and required the wealth of an empire to keep up in their former glory, could not avoid severely suffering by the neglect of man and the lapse of time. Still, however, their great strength and durability preserved them from immediate decay; since we have seen that this great city, about

* Memoir, p. 17.

sixty years afterwards, reared its proud head in rebellion against Darius, and we have observed the exemplary punishment which followed that rebellion. At a subsequent period, according to Arrian and Strabo, it experienced still worse treatment from the infuriated hostility of Xerxes, who, on his return from his fatal expedition into Greece, wreaked his vengeance upon this unfortunate city, by the plunder of its immense treasures, the demolition of its idols, and the ruin of its superb temple. He is said, also, to have levelled the remaining walls, and taken away the gates of brass; but all this must be understood with great latitude, as these walls were still existing under the Parthian dynasty. Perhaps he only dismantled them, and levelled them, as Rennell suggests, to a certain extent, “in order to lay the place open*.”

With other views, in the year 323 before Christ, the victorious Alexander entered within those walls. That conqueror being determined by its situation, its extent, and magnificence, though in ruins, to make it the capital and centre of his Eastern empire, immediately began the arduous task of restoring Babylon to its former grandeur. In the first place, he gave orders for rebuilding the temple of Belus, ruined by Xerxes; and, finding the priests rather slow in the performance of his orders, set ten thousand

* Rennell's Geography of Herodotus, p. 388.

soldiers about the work of removing the rubbish, which, though they laboured at it for two months, that is, till the day of his death, they had even then made but a small progress. He commenced a fresh embankment of the river two miles above the city, and he gave orders for the construction of docks and a haven that should contain a thousand vessels. But what in a more particular manner, as we are informed by Arrian, occupied his attention as the most important consideration, was the repair of the canals, which, during the desertion of the Persian kings, had been generally suffered to go to decay, at least all those of inferior moment; for without occasional attention to the greater canals, the country would have been utterly unproductive to the conquerors, and indeed uninhabitable. Of these the most important, on account of its magnitude and extensive utility, was that called Pallacopas, by which the superfluous waters of the river at the height of the inundation, as already stated, were carried into the lakes above alluded to.

Alexander, therefore, after thoroughly repairing that above Babylon to the west, so often alluded to, which led to the lake of Kerbelah, and those, it is also probable, that communicated with the Tigris on the east, is represented by his historians as embarking on the Euphrates, and sailing down the river to visit the place of its outlet, fifty miles below Babylon. On his arrival there, having well surveyed the ground, and issued peremptory orders for

its complete repair, the Macedonian commander then sailed quite through that canal into the marshes, where the remains of buildings, and many monuments of the ancient sovereigns and princes of Chal-dæa were discovered, an additional proof that even those wastes had formerly been inhabited ! In respect to the canal at Pallacopas, on examination it was found, that at the issue of the water the bank consisted of a soft oozy soil, little able to withstand the violent encroaches of a great and rapid river, which, at the annual inundation, according to respectable authority, rises sometimes twelve feet perpendicular. Of the width and extent of the breach thus made, some judgment may be formed from the circumstance recorded in Arrian, that a former satrap of Babylon, who had the charge of its repair, had been compelled to employ no less than 10,000 men for three months upon it, before the dam that restrained the river could be made sufficiently firm to resist its attack. To prevent any similar calamity from again occurring, Alexander, on finding that, about the distance of thirty furlongs below the existing outlet, the ground became solid and rocky, determined on that spot to cut a new passage for the waters, and continue it to the ancient canal of Pallacopas, where the firmness of the ground would resist the overwhelming violence of the river*. Arrian, who

* Arrian, lib. vii. cap. 21.

relates this fact, does not say that it was ever completed, and probably it was not, from the subsequent speedy decease, at Babylon, of the royal designer. So extensive and numerous were these lakes, that Alexander is represented as sailing about them as in a sea, and some of the gallies that accompanied him as losing their way for three days and three nights, till restored to a right course by Babylonian pilots. The circumstance of his losing his diadem in those marshes is remarkable, and reminds me of a passage in Mr. Rich, that in the same neighbourhood, at a ruined pile, situated about thirty-five hours to the south of Hellah, a cap or diadem of pure gold was found, a few years ago, which the Arabs refused to give up to the Pasha; p. 39.

These mighty designs, and many others, proposed by Alexander, being entirely frustrated by the untimely death of the projector at Babylon shortly after, during the contests for his empire among his contending generals, the repairs at Babylon were little attended to; and when, after a series of brilliant victories, the throne of Syria was at length secured to Seleucus, he seems early to have formed in his mind the idea of erecting a new capital for his empire, and of immortalizing his name by conferring it on the intended city. His residence, while he continued in Babylon, was probably in the new or western palace, and he might possibly have adorned and beautified that palace; but we never read of his attempting to rebuild the temple of Belus, according to the project of his great master, and its

massy ruins, ever before his eyes, reproached him with the neglect and ingratitude of his conduct. I say the *western* palace, to which the Hanging Gardens were annexed, although, according to Herodotus, there was but one palace; at least, he speaks but of one, perhaps he might mean only one deserving the name of a palace. The History of the Seleucidæ, however, decidedly confirms the account of Diodorus, that there were two palaces, the one much older than the other; and the passage which I shall adduce to prove the fact, will in some degree account for the speedier dilapidation of the former than the latter. For, when Demetrius, the son of Antigonus, twelve years after the death of Alexander, or ante Christum 311, marched against Babylon, he is said to have found the city deserted, all but the *two castles*, that is, the fortified palaces, which were strongly garrisoned. These he vigorously besieged, and having soon reduced one, the lesser probably, he gave it up to the rage and spoliage of his soldiers. The other castle resolutely holding out, on his departure he is said to have left Archelaus, with no less than 5000 foot and 1000 horse, to carry on the siege, for which purpose so large a number being thought necessary sufficiently marks the strength and the extent of the fortress even at that period of the decline of Babylon*. The history of this first

* Diodorus Siculus, lib. xix. p. 726, edit. Rhod.—Plutarch in Vita Demetrii, p. 84.

sovereign of the dynasty that bore his name, also informs us of another important fact, that Seleucus, in Ant. Christ. 317, attempted to destroy Eumenes and his army, then marching against Antigonus, by cutting the sluices of the Euphrates, and laying the whole scene of their encampment, between that river and the Tigris, under water*. If this resource were often resorted to, as probably it was, during his long and obstinate contests with his illustrious rivals, the successors of Alexander, we must cease to wonder at the fatal catastrophe that ensued.

That catastrophe now rapidly approached; for, being at length firmly seated on the throne of Syria, Seleucus, a few years afterwards, either dissatisfied with the situation, or weary of the great expenses of its repairs, or, as Dean Prideaux intimates, absolutely driven out of the neighbourhood of Babylon by the increasing inundations, erected a new capital on the western banks of the Tigris, about 50 miles distant from Babylon, and nearly opposite to the site of the present city of Bagdad. This city he called from his own name **SELEUCIA**, which, in grandeur and population, soon surpassed its august rival. On this occasion he is said to have carried away with him, from Babylon, no less than 500,000 persons, for the purpose of peopling with them his new capital; by which exhaus-

* Diod. Sic. lib. 19, p. 677, idem edit.

ture, says Pliny, *Babylonia ad solitudinem rediit**, Babylon was reduced to a perfect solitude. Dean Prideaux's account of this event is so very correct, and to the purpose, that I hope to be excused for citing, on this as upon a former occasion, the very words of that respectable writer, which are as follow :

“ By reason of the breaking down of the banks of the Euphrates, the country near Babylon being drowned, and the branch of that river which passed through the middle of the city, being shallowed and rendered unnavigable, this made the situation of Babylon by this time so very inconvenient, that, when the new city was built, it soon drained the other of all its inhabitants. For it being situated much more commodiously, and by the founder made the metropolis of all the provinces of his empire beyond the Euphrates, and the place of his residence, whenever he came into those parts, in the same manner as Antioch was for the other provinces which were on this side that river ; for the sake of these advantages the Babylonians in great numbers left their old habitations, and flocked to Seleucia. And besides, Seleucus having called the city by his own name, and designed it for an eminent monument thereof in after ages, gave it many privileges above the other cities of the east, the better to make it answer this purpose ; and these were a farther invitation to the Babylonians to transplant

* Plinii Nat. Hist. lib. 6, cap. 26.

themselves to it. And by these means, in a short time after the building of Seleucia, Babylon became wholly desolated; so that nothing was left remaining of it but its walls. And therefore Pliny tells us, that it was exhausted of its inhabitants, and brought to desolation. And Strabo saith the same, as doth also Pausanias in his Acadics, where he tells us, that Babylon, once the greatest city that the sun ever saw, had in his time (i. e. about the middle of the second century) nothing left but its walls. These remained long after. For the space within being made a park by the Parthian kings, for the keeping of wild beasts in it for their hunting, the walls were kept up to serve for a fence to the enclosure; and in this state it remained in Jerom's time, who lived in the fourth century. For he tells us, that excepting the walls, which were repaired for the enclosing of the wild beasts, that were there kept, all within was desolation: And in another place, that Babylon was nothing else, in his time, but a chace for wild beasts kept within the compass of its ancient walls for the hunting of the king; that is, of Persia. For after the Parthians, there reigned in Jerom's time over those countries a race of Persian kings, and continued there to the time of the Saracen empire, by which they were extinguished. When or how those walls became demolished, is nowhere said, no writer for several hundred years after Jerom's time speaking any more of this place*." In what manner those walls

* Prideaux's Connections, vol. i. page 448, folio edit. 1717.

were disposed of, the reader has been already informed in various preceding pages of this publication.

What has been given in such lengthened detail in the preceding pages may appear a very disproportionate exordium to the object intended to be discussed ; a mere change, for a few hundred yards, of the bed of the river Euphrates. The investigation of this subject, however, it should be considered, is of very great importance to Ancient Literature in general, since the remains of antiquity, as now surveyed at Babylon, seem in a great degree to contradict the statements of Herodotus, Diodorus Siculus, and other classical historians, concerning the position and arrangement of its principal structures. According to Mr. Rich, the ruins are all at present on the eastern side, and only the most insignificant ruins remain on the west. If the river therefore has not changed its course at least in a small degree, the ancients, as Major Rennell well observes, "have only been amusing us with fairy tales."

It will be recollectcd, that among the more immediate causes of the destruction of Babylon, I have already pointed out its massy super-impending walls, and the vast fosse with which it was surrounded. To these may be justly added, the very embankment of the river itself, a solid mass of burnt bricks and bitumen, sixty feet thick on each side ; for it is said to have been of the thickness of the wall of the city, and extending twelve miles in length, that is, the whole length of Babylon, along the river. The breadth

of that river, according to Strabo, was a stadium : but, according to the more accurate measurement of modern travellers, four hundred and fifty, or, at the most, five hundred feet : over which was constructed a bridge, formed of stones, strongly clamped together with lead and iron, and with square beams placed upon them. At each end of it was a palace of vast dimensions, one too, that on the west, which had the *Pensile gardens* annexed to it ; containing trees fifty feet high, raised tier above tier, also upon square pillars of stone. But farther—added to all this immense pile, under the river was a tunnel, twelve feet high and fifteen feet broad, which served as a covered passage for the founder to pass from one palace to the other. This immense accumulation, at one spot, of stone and brick, and iron and wood, in the course of years, neglected and dilapidating, must have proved an invincible obstruction to any stream, however violent, but more especially to one generally described as of a slow and equable motion, except at the time of the inundation, and compel it to seek another bed. If not exaggerated in respect to their magnitude, the vast trees of the hanging garden, alone, no longer refreshed by water from the hydraulic engines, by the crash of their fall, and that of the pillars which supported them, would alone have effected the fatal catastrophe ; but against the whole consolidated mass of ruins, a NIAGARA might have rolled in vain the collected torrent of its waters.

The obstructed stream of the Euphrates in consequence, since it

is the nature of water to find its proper level, probably flowed into what remained of the original ditch of the city, the work of its founder, or that afterwards made by Cyrus, in which Mr. Rich, we have seen, is of opinion that it had before found a temporary channel ; filling, with its wide-spreading current, all the cavities it found in its progress, till the whole city became perfectly deluged. At length, repelled by insurmountable obstacles, the main stream of the river changed its south-eastern to a south-western direction, and took that circuitous route without the central ruins, the commencement of which, at the GREAT BEND of the river near its entrance between the mounds of the ruined palaces, is decisively marked on the recent SKETCH of Major Rennell, appended to his Topography of Ancient Babylon, suggested by Mr. Rich's Memoir, in the 18th volume of the *Archæologia*. For this account I long anxiously waited, and, in consequence, delayed the publication of this Appendix ; being thoroughly convinced, that a gentleman, so well accustomed as himself, "to study on the spot, the wandering courses of rivers in alluvial soils*", was the most proper person to unravel the almost inexplicable mystery that involved both ancient Babylon and its river. The event has proved my judgment to be correct ;

* See Major Rennell's Dissertation on the Courses of the Ganges and Burrampooter rivers, added to his Memoir of a Map of Hindostan, p. 255, first edition.

for, as far as possible in this early stage of the inquiry, and with our present imperfect notices of the Ruins, their quality, dimensions, and respective distances from each other, that mystery has been unfolded.

With a scientific eye Major Rennell examined the whole ground-plot of ruins detailed in Mr. Rich's plan, from *Mohawell*, where they begin, quite to Hellah, a distance of nine miles ; and from that view has formed a new and more extended Sketch of his own, which Sketch includes the entire site of what is taken for ancient Babylon. These ruins are dispersed for the most part in separate mounds or masses throughout that whole extent, which is in perfect consonance with what ancient authors inform us, viz. that the houses in Babylon were by no means contiguous, but had void spaces between them, probably for gardens, reservoirs of water, and the free circulation of air, so necessary in that burning climate —*nec oīnnia continua sunt (tecta), credo quia tutius visum est pluribus locis spargi* ; Curtius, lib. v. cap. i. He adds, that only ninety stadia of the vast space inclosed were built upon, when Alexander took possession of Babylon ; meaning ninety in length : and, allowing as much in breadth, it follows, according to Prideaux's accurate calculation, that 8100 square furlongs were then built upon, and the remaining number of stadia left for ornament and cultivation*. The plan of the division and subdivision of the

* Prideaux, vol. i. p. 77.

city, therefore, into regular streets and squares, as given in the fourth volume of the Universal History, cannot be strictly true. Our concern, at present, however, is chiefly with the central ruins ; and our purpose to enquire if any direct unequivocal traces of the course of the river through them yet remain, and the labour of exploring them under the direction of this accomplished geographer, will not be in vain.

Mr. Rich has mentioned “a winding valley or ravine, 150 yards in breadth, the bottom of which is *white with nitre*; and which apparently never had any buildings in it;” this ravine, from his profound experience on the subject, Major Rennell pronounces to have every character of a *river bed*; and, from the circumstance of its being of the precise breadth of the river, viz. 150 yards, as stated by Mr. Rich himself, it consequently is a deserted bed of the river Euphrates. He mentions it as a subject of regret, that Mr. R. was not aware of this circumstance, as he might thence have been induced to examine the ground between the **GREAT BEND** of the river, opposite to the Mujelibe, and the opening between the two mounds before spoken of*. Future investigation, thus directed, will assuredly find in that ground unequivocal proofs of what is here so ingeniously conjectured; and its ancient original

* See the SKETCH above alluded to, in *Archæologia*, vol. xviii. p. 257.

bed will, in due time, be laid bare to the exploring eye of the delighted antiquary. But, independently of this circumstance, through nearly the whole extent of the ruins, as exhibited in *either sketch*, may be traced vestiges of the river having attempted, at various times, to *find*, or to *make*, a new channel for itself. There are in the eastern division, in particular, two strait mounds of earth of considerable extent, and running parallel to each other, evidently of a later date than that of Ancient Babylon, which every judicious inspector of the plate must conclude, with the Major, to have served as *dams* to prevent the inundation of the river in that quarter.

Major Rennell also thinks it not improbable that, at some period beyond the reach of history, the Euphrates once joined its main stream with the Tigris, between the sites of Babylon and Bagdad, and that some of the canals in that quarter are even made in the line of the hollow tract left by the Euphrates, when it separated from the Tigris. Beyond the period of history, he rightly observes,—for since the commencement of that æra no very important changes seem to have taken place in that quarter; the canals, as described by Herodotus the father of History, and by Xenophon who flourished only about half a century later, still continuing to flow, with little variation, in the time of the Caliphate. He afterwards explains himself in respect to the hollows, by observing that it is by no means to be inferred, that the cavities, alluded to, are confined

merely to the dimensions of the river bed ; but that the river, by varying its course in that general direction, had left many hollows*.”

In fact, that change of the course of the river for which we have been all along contending, seems at this moment to be going on, for Mr. Rich speaks of a triangular piece of ground exhibited also upon the plate accompanying his description, *recently gained from the river*, by the desertion of its original channel above, 110 yards in length, and 250 in breadth, from which other more important changes in a long course of years may justly be inferred. He also speaks of a *subterraneous passage*, discovered at the depth of fifty feet below the surface, under one of the principal mounds, where probably one of the ancient palaces stood, which, if no portion of the *tunnel*, so particularly described by Diodorus, might yet be the very aqueduct, from which the water was derived, with which the hanging gardens were irrigated, by means of the immense engines mentioned above. It affords a curious and unlooked for corroboration of what has been before remarked, in respect to the total ignorance of the Babylonians concerning the construction of the **Arch** ; being only overlaid with flat pieces of sand stone, “a yard thick, and several yards long†.”

* Illustrations of Xenophon, p. 76.

† See Mr. Rich’s Memoir, p. 23, and the Dissertation concerning the Arch, in the preceding portion of this work, p. 18, quarto edit.

Thus has the reader been presented with abundant proofs of this great river having in different ages repeatedly changed its course ; first, in the instance recorded by Pliny, when it entered the Persian Gulph in a more southerly direction, by a mouth of its own, the deserted bed of whose current at that period has been traced by D'Anville on his map of Asia, and has been also observed by Niebuhr, and other travellers ; secondly, by the evident remains, just noticed, of a still more ancient bed which the Nahr Malkai, and other canals, it is highly probable, afterwards usurped ; and thirdly, by those still more convincing testimonies which the voice of history and the field of the ruins itself so forcibly and indeed so irresistibly point out to his view. The result of future inquiry and farther excavation will doubtless be, if there is *any truth in history*, or *any solidity in argument*, the gradual developement, and at length the complete elucidation, of the whole **ARCANA** of Babylon, although that desirable event may possibly not take place till the youngest geographer, at present living, shall have reposed his head in that sepulchral dust, which now shades the departed glory of the Queen of the East.

FINIS.

BOOKS PUBLISHED FOR THE AUTHOR.

The BANKRUPTCY of my Booksellers, Messrs. WHITE, COCHRANE, and Co. of Fleet-street, having thrown upon my hands all the remaining unsold copies of my works, both in prose and poetry, I am compelled to become my own BIBLIOPOLIST, in respect to the following Publications.

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☞ The above are now to be had of the AUTHOR, at the BRITISH MUSEUM.

YW

